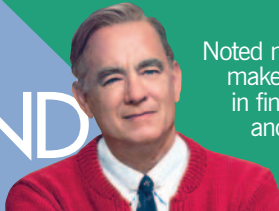


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EDITION



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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Lives — on the — line



VITALI KOMAR/AP

**A Ukrainian soldier crouches in a trench near the town of Avdiivka, Ukraine, on Monday. While \$400 million in stalled U.S. military aid figures prominently in impeachment hearings playing out in Washington, that money has a significant effect on troops on the ground.**

## US aid makes vital difference on Ukraine's bleak front

By INNA VARENYTSA  
Associated Press

AVDIIVKA, Ukraine — U.S.-made medical equipment, night-vision devices and countermortar radar make a difference for Ukrainian troops fighting Kremlin-backed separatists on the front line of the standoff between Russia and the West. Sometimes, it's the difference between life and death.

So when \$400 million in U.S. military aid to Kyiv was held up this year, Ukrainians got nervous.

Every bit of assistance helps in the World War I-style trenches of Avdiivka, where conscripts and volunteer soldiers use shovels to shore up mud walls, chop wood for makeshift stoves and cook their own food from local vegetables and canned supplies.

Rostyslav Pokotylo shows off the American flag inside the case for his night-vision gun scope, which

### IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS

■ Giuliani sought investigations of Bidens, key witnesses say

■ Republican support for Trump remains steadfast

**Page 8**

he credits with saving his life in 2017.

"I ended up in a combat zone ... If not for this, who knows what would have happened," he says. "With its help, I could see the enemy. I saw the enemy first, and we opened fire."

As impeachment hearings play out in Washington, Ukrainian troops at the front described to The Associated Press their hopes and fears in the five-year conflict that has taken 13,000 lives as sporadic gunfire punctuated the autumn calm.

Democrats in Congress say President Donald Trump pressured his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, a Democratic rival, while withholding U.S. military aid to Kyiv. Trump says the aid was held up over corruption concerns.

**SEE LINE ON PAGE 9**

## Trump says Navy won't strip SEAL of trident

By MISSY RYAN  
AND DAN LAMOTHE  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday pushed back on the military's plans to strip a service member accused of misconduct of his status as a Navy SEAL, days after the president intervened to roll back other disciplinary actions against him and two other service members accused of war crimes.



Gallagher

"The Navy will NOT be taking away Warfighter and Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher's 'Trident Pin,'" the president said in a tweet. "This case was handled very badly from the beginning. Get back to business!"

The message followed reports that senior Navy officials had set in motion steps to remove the chief petty officer's SEAL trident, which would effectively end his status as a member of the secretive, elite force. Earlier this year, a military court acquitted Gallagher of the majority of a series of war crimes charges relating to the battle against Islamic State in Iraq, including charges of murdering a militant captive, but he was convicted of a lesser charge of posing for a photo with the man's corpse.

The senior officer who drafted the steps to remove Gallagher from the SEALs, Rear Adm. Colin Green, oversees Naval Special Warfare Command. Green also sought to review whether three officers who oversaw Gallagher in Iraq also should be ejected from the SEALs. They are Lt. Cmdr. Robert Breisch, Lt. Jacob Portier and Lt. Thomas MacNeil.

**SEE TRIDENT ON PAGE 7**

## MILITARY

# Number of bases with water issues likely to rise

By TARA COPP

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON—The number of known military installations with water sources contaminated by cancer-linked firefighting foam is likely to rise, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

In 2018, the Pentagon reported that 401 sites—including wells, on-base drinking sources and groundwater—at its military bases and communities worldwide had tested positive for higher than allowable levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl compounds, commonly known as PFAS.

The compounds are concentrated in the Aqueous Film-Forming Foam, or AFFF, that the military has sprayed on aircraft fires since the 1970s.

The compounds in the military firefighting foam have been linked to cancers and birth defects. Over decades of use at military bases, the foam has seeped into groundwater and drinking water sources.

Since the release of the original list of 401 sites in the 2018 report, communities near military bases across the U.S. have

demanding that the Department of Defense fix the water contamination. Some states, such as New Mexico, have also filed lawsuits to force a faster cleanup or compensation.

Based on further testing, that 401 number is likely to go higher, Robert McMahon, assistant secretary of defense for sustainment said Wednesday. A new, higher number is expected in an interim report on the issue that is expected to go to Defense Secretary Mark Esper next week.

"We think there's probably more installations than that," McMahon said. "We found that we undercounted within some of the (National) Guard sites."

"I think what you will see out of the report is a revised number above 401," McMahon said.

The upcoming report was directed by



McMahon

Esper in July. It is expected to address the status of cleanup, which the Pentagon has previously reported will top \$2 billion, and how best to move forward with getting health care for those affected by the contaminated water.

PFAS is just one of many types of potential "toxic exposures" linked to an increased number of cancers among veterans that military families are now pressing the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs to more directly address and find ways to make it easier for affected service members or their families to get care.

In October, McClatchy reported in an exclusive investigation that the rate of urinary cancer treatments provided by the VA since fiscal year 2000 had increased 61%, prostate cancer treatments had increased 23%, liver and pancreatic cancer treatments had increased 96% and blood cancer treatments had increased 18%.

Esper is expected to receive a draft of the report before Thanksgiving, with a final report to be distributed to the public in late December or early January.

McMahon said the report will also likely

conclude that so far, the military has not found a suitable substitute for AFFF to put out military aircraft fires.

While the military has put in place a substitute foam with lower concentrations of the PFAS compounds for training purposes, it is still using the original AFFF to put out actual aircraft fires, McMahon said.

In a meeting with reporters, McMahon lifted up a small jar of one of the substitute foams that had been developed. It was a viscous, amber-colored gel that did not pour quickly to the mouth of the jar when it was tipped upside-down.

That would be unacceptable in an actual fire, where the slow-moving gel would not be quick enough to put out a fire on a ship, for example, McMahon said.

So far, the Defense Department has spent about \$22 million researching a new foam.

The use of the foam has left many veterans wondering whether the cancers they or family members have faced are linked to firefighting foam.

## Coast Guardsman charged with murder released from brig

By ANDREW DYER

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO—A Coast Guard seaman accused of murder was released from a San Diego brig Monday as the admiral overseeing his prosecution ordered a new hearing in the case.

Seaman Ethan W. Tucker, 21, was arrested Aug. 28 after a seven-month Coast Guard investigation into the January death of Seaman Ethan Kelch, Jr., who served on the same ship as Tucker—the Douglas Munro, a high endurance cutter based in Kodiak, Alaska.

Tucker is charged with murder, invol-

untary manslaughter, aggravated assault, making false official statements, obstruction of justice and failure to obey orders. He has not entered a plea and won't do so unless his case is referred to a court-martial.

Initially, the Coast Guard accused Tucker of causing blunt force trauma to Kelch the night of Jan. 26 and dragging him into the frigid water where he drowned. His body was found Jan. 27.

However, evidence presented by Tucker's defense at a preliminary Article 32 hearing Oct. 16 cast the events of that night in a different light.

Snapchat videos posted by a witness who was there that night—Coast Guard

Seaman Trevin Hunter—showed Tucker trying to keep Kelch out of the water, not placing him there, said Navy Cmdr. Justin Henderson, Tucker's attorney at the hearing. The videos were not shown in court.

According to testimony at the October hearing, Kelch often became belligerent and difficult to deal with when he drank. Henderson said that on the night Kelch died, Tucker fought with him when Kelch tried to "go for a swim" in waters off Amaknak Island.

Henderson said that night the three men had downed a bottle of R&R Reserve Whiskey. Tucker fought to keep Kelch out of the water for about half an hour, accord-

ing to Henderson, before Tucker collapsed, exhausted and intoxicated.

Tucker was found unconscious 200 yards from where Kelch's body was later found by first responders the next day.

Testimony by the Alaska medical examiner who performed Kelch's autopsy also contradicted the government's narrative. Dr. Kristin Rolf testified over the phone that none of Kelch's head injuries were fatal and that he died by drowning.

That was enough for Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, the Coast Guard's Pacific area commander, to send Tucker's case back to prosecutors. A new Article 32 hearing is scheduled for Dec. 3 in Alameda, Calif.

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## PACIFIC



MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

South Korean soldiers prepare a T-80U battle tank for an exercise at Rodriguez Live Fire Range in Pocheon, South Korea, on Tuesday.

## GIs training in S. Korea get a look at Cold War-era tank

BY MATTHEW KEELER  
Stars and Stripes

POCHEON, South Korea — Soldiers of the U.S. 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, nearly five months into a nine-month rotation in South Korea, peered this week inside a Cold War relic, one they may still encounter on the battlefield.

At the Rodriguez Live Fire Range, troops of 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment out of Fort Hood, Texas, inspected Russian T-80 battle tanks courtesy of their South Korean army hosts. South Korea still fields the T-80 as part of its arsenal.

"This is an opportunity for my soldiers to take a look at a T-80U tank," Sgt. 1st Class Travis Husted, a platoon sergeant, told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday. "It gives the opportunity to crawl around, check out their capabilities, limitations and understanding, due to the fact that it's a type of tank that three countries often use."

"It's an opportunity for them to understand what they are going to be up against, possibly."

South Korea's own 3rd Armored Brigade brought the tanks to the complex. It acquired dozens of T-80Us from Russia in the mid-1990s to satisfy debts left by the former Soviet Union.

South Korea also fields two newer battle tanks, the K1 Type-88 and the more recent K2 Black Panther. U.S. forces employ the M1 Abrams battle tank.

At the live fire range the tank crews from Fort Hood train as a single four-man team: tank commander, gunner, loader and driver.

Pvt. Christian Pelissier, a loader on an Abrams, said this was the first Korean tank he has seen since joining the brigade in July.

"You can tell the equipment is outdated, and it's actually pretty cool they're able to adapt to that and still use it in modern battlefields," he said. "I was able to hop in the gunner seat and the driver's seat and have a look around. I also didn't even know that it was auto-loading."

The two brigades held a battle drill involving two South Korean and four U.S. tanks and 16

soldiers on the range Tuesday, even after the U.S. and South Korea postponed a joint air drill over the weekend in the wake of complaints from North Korea. Another tank drill was scheduled Wednesday.

The charactersizes U.S.-South Korean military exercises as rehearsals for invasion. U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper postponed the air force drill as an "act of goodwill" meant to bring the North back to negotiations aimed at eliminating its nuclear arsenal. The North dismissed the gesture as insufficient.

For the U.S. tankers, working with an ally was a valuable experience, said Husted.

"One of the most delicate tasks that we have as an armored force is coordinating with adjacent units — that's a task that we have a hard time mastering within our own army," he said. "Having the opportunity to go outside to a friendly nation and coordinate with their tank units and master it here is pretty unique."

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## Esper: No regret over postponing US-S. Korea drills

BY HYUNG-JIN KIM  
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Thursday he does not regret postponing a U.S.-South Korean military exercise, even though the gesture was rejected by North Korea as not enough to restart nuclear diplomacy.

The prospects for a resumption of the nuclear diplomacy are unclear, with Pyongyang stepping up its pressures on Washington to make bigger concessions. On Wednesday, the North's 1st vice foreign minister, Choe Son Hui, repeated it won't return to a negotiating table unless the United States drops its hostile policy against the North.

"We can discuss the nuclear issue with the U.S. only when it withdraws all its hostile policies against (North Korea)," Choe told reporters during a visit to Moscow, according to South Korean media footage. "In that sense, I think a summit or leaders' talks (between North Korea and the U.S.) isn't an interesting issue for us."

The U.S. and South Korea announced Sunday they indefinitely postponed the annual Vigilant Ace aerial training as part of efforts to revive the nuclear talks, as North Korea has called the training an invasion rehearsal.

In response, senior North Korean official Kim Yong Chol said Tuesday the U.S. must scrap that military drill completely and abandon its hostility against his country if it wants to see the resumption of the nuclear negotiations.

North Korea wants the U.S. to lift major international sanctions on it and provide security assurances before it fully abandons its nuclear arsenal. But the U.S. has maintained sanctions would stay in place until North Korea takes serious steps toward

**'I don't regret taking the high road.'**

Mark Esper  
U.S. defense secretary

denuclearization.

Before boarding his plane in Hanoi, Vietnam, for a flight to Washington, Esper described North Korea's response to the drill's postponement as being "not as positive as we would have liked."

In Esper's words: "I don't regret taking the high road."

Esper also said he does not believe there is a rift in the U.S.-South Korean alliance, despite a breakdown this week in negotiations over a U.S. demand for a five-fold increase in what Seoul pays to keep 28,500 American troops on its soil.

The Pentagon also denied a report in South Korea's biggest newspaper that the U.S. was considering withdrawing some troops if Seoul didn't agree to that increase.

There was "absolutely no truth" to the Chosun Ilbo report, said chief Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman, who noted Esper "repeatedly reiterated our ironclad commitment" to South Korea during his talks with South Korean officials.

A U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at ridding North Korea of its nuclear weapons has largely been deadlocked since the February collapse of a summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Kim Jong Un has demanded the U.S. come up with new, acceptable measures to salvage the nuclear talks by year's end.

## US denies it's considering troop reduction in South Korea

BY GLEN CAREY  
AND JHYE LEE  
Bloomberg

The U.S. dismissed a report that it is considering a withdrawal of thousands of its troops to gain leverage with South Korea as the Trump administration seeks to have it pay five times more to host American service members.

The South Korea leader Chosun Ilbo reported Thursday the U.S. was considering withdrawing one of its brigades if ongoing defense cost talks with Seoul don't go as it wants.

Jonathan Hoffman, chief Pentagon spokesman, later said in a statement that "there is absolutely no truth" to the report, which the paper attributed to a diplomatic source in Washington familiar with the talks.

Esper "reiterated our ironclad commitment" to South Korea and its people during discussions in Seoul last week, Hoffman said.

Earlier Thursday, the defense chief had told reporters that the U.S. wasn't using troop levels as a bargaining chip in funding talks with host countries.

"We aren't threatening allies

over this. This is a negotiation," he said.

Questions were raised about the stability of one of America's most important military alliances as when U.S. negotiators walked out of a meeting in Seoul on cost sharing. South Korea balked at a Trump administration demand for a five-fold increase in funding.

The current cost-sharing agreement reached earlier this year expires at the end of 2019. South Korea's Defense Ministry said that despite the latest acrimony, the U.S. has vowed in

its latest meeting that its forces would stay.

President Donald Trump has demanded South Korea contribute about \$5 billion for hosting U.S. troops, well above the current one-year deal where Seoul pays about \$1 billion.

The price tag originated with the White House, according to people familiar with the matter, and administration officials justify it by saying it reflects the costs South Korea would incur if it takes operational control of combined U.S.-South Korean forces in the case of a conflict.

The U.S. has about 28,500 service members in South Korea.

Trump has repeatedly expressed frustration with the open-ended troop deployment, saying after his first meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last year that he would "like to bring them back home, but that's not part of the equation right now."

At the same time, he has accepted a long-standing Kim demand and suspended major joint military exercises that the U.S. and South Korea have relied on to maintain readiness.



## MILITARY

# NATO plans \$1B upgrade to AWACS fleet

By SLOBODAN LEKIC  
Stars and Stripes

NATO wants to eventually replace its Cold War-era early warning aircraft but will in the meantime upgrade the jets at a cost of \$1 billion.

The move to improve the planes, flown by U.S. Air Force and multinational pilots, reflected a need to modernize air reconnaissance assets, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said during a two-day meeting of alliance foreign ministers that opened Wednesday.

"I can confirm that we will sign a contract upgrading, modernizing the AWACS fleet, \$1 billion," Stoltenberg said, referring to the Aerial Early Warning and Control planes.

NATO operates 14 Boeing E-3A Sentry aircraft, half of which were delivered by Boeing in 1982. They are registered in Luxembourg and are among a few military assets owned by the alliance rather than its 29 member states.



SHAWN MONK/U.S. Air Force

**A NATO AWACS aircraft leaves formation after performing mid-air refueling training in May 2018. NATO has announced plans to upgrade its Cold War-era AWACS fleet.**

The unit is based at Geilenkirchen, Germany, near the border with the Netherlands in the south. The E-3As are commanded on a rotational basis by either a U.S. Air Force or a German Air Force major general.

In recent years, the planes have pat-

trolled the Mediterranean Sea and supported NATO exercises over the Baltics, among other missions.

Stoltenberg did not say what specific upgrades NATO was looking at for the E-3As, which are identifiable by their prominent radar dishes and based on the frame of the four-engine Boeing 707 passenger airliner.

One likely upgrade would include changing the four old Pratt and Whitney TP-33 jet engines — first flown 60 years ago — with a modernized, more efficient power plant.

The U.S. Air Force, which operates the largest fleet of E-3s, has also been incrementally modernizing its aircraft, especially the avionics suite and battle management systems.

"We are looking into how to replace the AWACS in the future, so after 2035," Stoltenberg said.

Since the E-3 was introduced into service 40 years ago, a number of smaller and cheaper battle management recon-

naissance aircraft have been developed, including the twin-jet Boeing E-7, which could be a contender to eventually replace the E-3As.

NATO Sentries were first used in combat during the 1999 Kosovo War, when they controlled air-to-air engagements against Serbian MiG-29s. Five MiGs were shot down by allied fighters during the 78-day bombing campaign.

NATO AWACS aircraft played an important role in other alliance operations, such as in the United States after 9/11 and in Libya and Afghanistan.

Stoltenberg also said that NATO would soon receive its first Northrop-Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk high-altitude surveillance drones, which will give commanders on the ground a better picture of combat situations.

NATO signed a contract in 2012 for five of the drones, to be based in Sigonella, Italy, in 2012.

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# Vietnam to receive a second US Coast Guard cutter

By WYATT OLSON  
Stars and Stripes

Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said Wednesday that Vietnam will receive a second Coast Guard cutter from the United States sometime next year, bolstering that nation's capability to push back against China's maritime antagonism in the South China Sea.

"This ship represents another concrete symbol for our strengthening relationship," Esper said during a speech to a group of students at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam in Hanoi. "Not only does this cooperation enhance the security of Vietnam and the broader region, but it also builds trust and mutual respect, which creates harmony between our people."

The Vietnam Coast Guard received the first cutter in May 2017. The decommissioned U.S. Coast Guard Hamilton-class cutter Morgenthau was originally commissioned in 1969.

A statement from the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi in 2017 said the first cutter would be renamed CSB 8020 and be used to improve the Vietnam Coast Guard's "maritime domain awareness."



CORY MENDENHALL/U.S. Coast Guard

**The Coast Guard cutter Morgenthau, shown getting underway in 2010 at San Pedro, Calif., was the first cutter transferred to Vietnam, in 2017.**

Esper's speech Wednesday left no doubt that the transfer is in direct response to China's assertions of sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, which is believed to hold a wealth of petroleum and minerals. It is also a major shipping route.

"The long period of peace, which enabled the economic rise of nearly every Asian nation, is

yielding to a renewed style of Chinese conduct that infringes on the sovereign rights of other states," Esper said.

During his past week of travel to South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines, Esper spoke with defense leaders and officials with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"In just about every conversa-

tion I had, there was one theme that consistently emerged, one theme," he said. "And that is the international rules-based order that has enabled the prosperity and security of the Indo-Pacific nations for decades is now under duress."

"As a result, the sovereignty of proud and independent Indo-Pacific nations is being threatened."

Vietnam and China vessels routinely clash in the sea, sometimes within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone.

In July, China dispatched a ship into Vietnam's exclusive economic zone to conduct a month of seismic surveying.

In a 2016 decision, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague invalidated China's claim over most of the South China Sea in a case brought to the international tribunal by the Philippines.

"We are committed to expanding our strategic partnership [with Vietnam] by increasing cooperation in areas of common interest, such as maritime security, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief," Esper said. "This

includes providing Vietnam the capabilities it needs to protect its sovereignty and national natural resources so that it can continue to thrive."

The U.S. has delivered 18 patrol boats to Vietnam since 2017, most recently with the transfer last spring of six patrol boats valued at \$12 million.

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# Japan, Australia agree to hold regular air force training

By SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Two of America's most important Pacific allies have agreed to participate in annual air force exercises in each other's territory starting in 2020.

The Japan Air Self-Defense Force will be a regular participant in the Pitch Black air drills, held every two years in Australia's Northern Territory, the two

countries' defense ministers announced Wednesday. The Royal Australian Air Force will also be a regular participant in Bushido Guardian, a bilateral fighter exercise held in Japan for the first time this year.

Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono and his Australian counterpart, Linda Reynolds, announced the move along with other defense cooperation in a joint statement following Reynolds' first official visit to Tokyo

this week.

The pair "reaffirmed their intention to develop defence cooperation among Australia, Japan and the United States," according to the joint statement.

The ministers said they will accelerate defense cooperation, including in the fields of military exercises, personnel exchanges, space and cyber policy, defense science and technology, the joint statement said.

The pair also announced that

an Australian Army liaison officer would work in the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force to enhance cooperation.

They're also establishing an exchange program for defense scientists and engineers to deepen links between Japan's Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency and Australia's Defence Science and Technology Group, the pair said in their statement.

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## MILITARY

# Ramstein puts prize money to work on base

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — When Ramstein Air Base got \$700,000 in prize money for being named the Pentagon's best Air Force installation earlier this year, wing leaders turned to airmen and their families for ideas on how to spend the money and improve life on base.

They got a slew of suggestions. After weeding out the unfeasible and unaffordable ones, they got to work.

So far, about \$50,000 of the tax-free prize money has gone to fixing what was "a resounding area of concern for folks" — enlarging the narrow parking spaces in the two main lots outside Ramstein's shopping mall, said Chief Master Sgt. Ernesto Rendon, the 86th Airlift Wing command chief.

About \$184,000 is going to installing Wi-Fi at facilities across base and in dormitories for airmen throughout the Kaiserslautern area; \$263,000 is being used to pave an access road on base and reduce traffic in the commissary parking lot; and \$50,000 will be spent installing 24/7 access at the South Side Fitness Center.

Other wish-list items the wing

hopes to fund in the future include improving sports facilities, including the softball and youth fields, Rendon said.

Elsewhere, some of the prize money will be spent to renovate the chapel kitchen at Lajes Field in the Azores, which is aligned under the 86th Airlift Wing, and to upgrade the furnishings at the vehicle registration office at Kapaun Air Station in Kaiserslautern.

Ramstein was the Air Force selection for the annual Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence in May. President Ronald Reagan established the award in 1985 to recognize installations that best support their mission with limited resources.

One of the suggestions Rendon said base officials wish they could have fulfilled was to build a vehicle bridge that would allow people to drive from the housing area on Vogelweh to the other side of the installation. The two sides are already connected by a pedestrian bridge but building a bridge for cars would require military construction funds, Rendon said.

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JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

A new access road is being paved between the North Side Chapel and the commissary on Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The \$263,000 project was paid for with money the base received for being named the Air Force's best installation this year.

## Major dismissed over relationship gains sentence review

By NANCY MONTGOMERY  
Stars and Stripes

A helicopter pilot who had an affair with the wife of a Special Forces soldier fighting in Afghanistan and who harassed her after she broke off the relationship says his dismissal from the Army was too harsh a punishment.

Maj. Jason A. Scott, who pleaded guilty at his court-martial to conduct unbecoming an officer and failure to obey an order, is asking the military's highest court to overturn the sentence.

After serving for more than 20 years, including combat missions in Iraq, he argued he is entitled to a pension and other retirement benefits, which he said he would have received if not for his incompetent military defense lawyers.

The Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces this month agreed to review the case.

Scott, an Apache helicopter pilot, met the woman — the wife of a deployed sergeant first class assigned to the 19th Special Forces Group — in May 2015 at a spin class she was teaching at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The two soon began dating, according to court documents.

Unaware for some weeks that she was married, Scott introduced the woman as his girlfriend to co-workers. By October, the command had learned the woman was married and Scott's superior, a colonel, ordered an end to the romance. Scott did not comply.

After the sergeant's wife ended the relationship in January, Scott began harassing her by text message, alternately threatening her, demanding sex and professing his love, court documents say.

In one message, Scott sent the

woman a link to a news story about a Special Forces soldier who had been killed in Afghanistan, and asked if her husband was dead.

When she responded that his unit was surrounded and that members of the unit had been killed, Scott "suggested that he might get lucky if [her husband] were to be killed in action," according to the Army Court of Criminal Appeals case summary. He also told her, "No man wants a whore for a wife."

After he returned from deployment, the sergeant first class spoke at Scott's court-martial. He said that learning about the affair and Scott having "joked" about his death had altered his view of officers.

The Army Court of Criminal Appeals, which heard the case last year, said Scott's dismissal was appropriate.

"One must think hard to conjure a worse case of adultery than when a field grade officer knowingly has a long-term sexual relationship with the spouse of an enlisted soldier who is deployed in combat, and then egregiously disobeys direct orders to end the relationship," the court said.

But the court also said Scott's lawyers' handling of the case might entitle him to a new sentencing hearing.

It agreed with the lawyers' own assessments that they'd been ineffective in Scott's defense, in part because they had not anticipated or prepared for the sentence they called "ludicrous" and "unconscionable."

"That a dismissal was a plausible sentence should have been obvious," the Army court said.

The lawyers also failed to suf-

ficiently detail Scott's decades of service or present two witnesses — the former battalion commander under whom Scott served a 15-month Iraq deployment and a chief warrant officer — who

both described Scott as a fearless warrior.

Instead, the defense called as a witness the colonel whose order Scott disobeyed, and who told prosecutors under cross-exami-

nation that Scott's conduct "was so detrimental to good order and discipline that it needed to be snuffed out immediately."

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## MILITARY

# Bill seeks better mammograms for Tricare users

By NIKKI WENTLING  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Active-duty service members and other women who use Tricare for their medical treatment would benefit from the latest technology for breast cancer screening under new legislation expected to be introduced Thursday in the House and Senate.

The Better and Robust Screening Today Act, or BRST Act, would require Tricare to offer digital breast tomosynthesis as a primary and preventative health care service to military members, retirees and their families.

Digital breast tomosynthesis, referred to as DBT, builds a three-dimensional image of a breast to better detect and diagnose breast cancer, especially for women with dense breast tissue.

The technology is already available to women who use Medicare

or the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care. Tricare, though, covers only mammograms with two-dimensional images, which some lawmakers say is a suboptimal standard of care.

"What we're hoping is that in dropping this particular legislation, that we're able to fix this gap," said Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Penn.

Houlahan is leading the bill in the House, and Sen. Martha MacSally, R-Ariz., is sponsoring the Senate's version. Both women are veterans. MacSally, a former combat pilot, retired from the Air Force after 22 years. Houlahan's father was a career naval aviator, and she worked for several years as an Air Force engineer.

As a retiree, MacSally is eligible for Tricare but primarily receives medical treatment from the VA, she said.

"I'm going to get a mammogram next week, but I'm going to the VA, so I'll have better technology than those on Tricare," MacSally said. "And that's ridiculous."

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer for women, with one in eight women developing the cancer in their lifetimes, according to the American Cancer Society. DBT has been found to help radiologists detect breast cancer and reduce the need for biopsies.

MacSally and Houlahan sent letters in September to Thomas McCaffery, the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, urging him to expand Tricare coverage to include DBT screenings. Ten female senators signed onto the letter with MacSally, and 50 House members signed Houlahan's version.

MacSally said Wednesday she was still waiting for McCaffery's

response.

"When a problem comes to us, I ask, 'Does this literally take an act of Congress to fix?' Oftentimes, we can, in our oversight role, shine a light on a problem and get the agency to fix what they're doing and do the right thing," MacSally said. "In this case, they appear to not be budging. So, we're dropping the legislation."

The lawmakers view the legislation as a patchwork fix until language could be added next year to the National Defense Authorization Act.

Both women said their military service gives them a "unique lens" to address issues facing female veterans and service members — including the lack of DBT screenings.

The 116th Congress has a record number of female veterans, with seven total in the House and Senate. Female veterans in the

house doubled during the 2018 congressional elections, from two to four.

Earlier this year, the House created the Servicewomen and Women Veterans Congressional Caucus, which Houlahan chairs. Houlahan first heard about Tricare not providing DBT screenings when advocates brought the problem before the caucus.

"It is a unique perspective that I think people like us bring to Congress," Houlahan said. "We have experienced the difficulties of serving and the issues when we become veterans."

The House and Senate versions of the BRST Act will be introduced Thursday. Houlahan and MacSally said they're optimistic about the bills making it through their respective chambers.

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NATI HARNIK/AP

A statue of a B-52 bomber stands in front of U.S. Strategic Command's new command and control center at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska following a dedication ceremony Monday.

## New nuclear control HQ dedicated

Associated Press

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. — The new \$1.3 billion headquarters for the command unit that controls the nation's nuclear-armed forces has been dedicated at an Air Force Base south of Omaha.

Officers and enlisted men joined civilian dignitaries for

ceremonies Monday at Offutt Air Force Base.

The facility is named the Gen. Curtis E. LeMay Building. LeMay headed what was then known as the Air Force's Strategic Air Command until 1957 when he left to take a Pentagon post. Strategic Air Command eventually became a multiservice unit under a new

name — U.S. Strategic Command, or StratCom.

Work on the 916,000-square-foot command and control center began in October 2012. Contractors worked through several setbacks, including floods and persistent mold.

Around 2,000 of StratCom's 3,200 employees have moved in.

## Bill introduced to build monument in DC to honor Medal of Honor recipients

By ROSE L. THAYER  
Stars and Stripes

A Washington monument to honor Medal of Honor recipients was proposed Tuesday in legislation introduced by two Texas congressmen.

The National Medal of Honor Monument Act, filed by Reps. Marc Veasey, a Democrat, and Ron Wright, a Republican, tasks the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation with the creation of a monument in Washington to honor the more than 3,500 recipients of the nation's highest award for military service. The bill also recognizes Arlington, Texas, as the new home of the National Medal of Honor Museum, also under the management of the foundation.

Last month, the North Texas city, located 20 miles west of downtown Dallas, was named as the home of the future museum by the Medal of Honor Museum Foundation.

"We look forward to working with the bipartisan contingent of elected officials to make sure we are doing all that we can to honor the more than 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients and get this great piece of legislation passed," said Joe Daniels, CEO and president of the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation.

The foundation has identified potential sites for a monument and is working with a bipartisan group of members of Congress to build the monument in an ideal location as quickly as possible, according to a spokesperson for the foundation. Information related to the rendering and cost of the monument is not yet available, but it will use private and public donations.

The measure has gained 18 co-

sponsors, 12 of which are from Texas. After introduction, it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, according to the lower chamber's website. The full text of the bill is not yet available.

"I am honored to introduce this legislation that will honor these brave men and women for risking their lives to protect our democracy," Veasey said in a statement.

"I am also proud to join my fellow North Texan, Congressman Wright, to ensure that the city of Arlington, Texas, will be the forever home of this new Medal of Honor Museum." Wright expressed similar sentiments in a statement. "These men and women went above and beyond ... in order to preserve our values and way of life."

Rep. Ron Wright  
R-Texas

"deserve to be memorialized with a monument," he said.

"These men and women went above and beyond the call of duty on the battlefield in order to preserve our values and way of life," Wright said.

The Arlington museum is scheduled to open to the public in 2024 and will be located near two professional sports stadiums also located in the city. It will feature permanent, interactive experiences and rotating exhibitions and an education center.

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## USMC steel barrier in Hawaii raises concern

Associated Press

HONOLULU — A U.S. Marine Corps plan to install a steel barrier to protect part of a Honolulu training facility from beach erosion has raised concerns among neighbors and advocates.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Wednesday that residents near Ewa Beach are

seeking further study of the environmental impact of a proposed 1,500-foot barrier.

The Marines say modifications are needed at the Puuloa Range Training Facility to protect its training range shoreline from erosion.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz called on the Marines

Tuesday to review the environmental impact of its plan to build the retaining wall.

A change.org petition signed by more than 1,100 people as of Tuesday seeks a thorough environmental impact statement analysis beyond the less robust environmental assessment already conducted.

## MILITARY



J.P. LAWRENCE/Stars and Stripes

**Armed militants watch a convoy pass through Logar province during a cease-fire between the Taliban and the Afghan government in 2018. A new report says the terrorist group killed more than 6,000 people last year.**

## Report says US, allies' military success drove down terrorism deaths

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Military successes by the U.S. and its allies against terrorist groups helped drive down global deaths from terrorism in 2018 for the fourth consecutive year, a report released this week said.

But even as terrorism deaths declined in most countries, they soared in Afghanistan, despite the U.S. launching peace talks with the Taliban that year to try to end decades of war in the country.

Terrorism deaths in Afghanistan soared by nearly 60% to more than 7,300 in 2018, with most of those casualties blamed on the Taliban, which overtook the Islamic State group to become the deadliest terrorist organization in the world, said the Global Terrorism Index 2019 report released Wednesday.

The Taliban killed 6,000 people last year in Afghanistan, said the report, issued by Australia's Institute for Economics and Peace think tank.

At the same time, military successes against ISIS caused it to sharply lose ground in Iraq and Syria, said the report, which has been compiled annually since 2013.

U.S. airstrikes in Somalia also

led to a decline in terrorism deaths there and a 24% fall in attacks by the al-Shabab terror group, the report said.

As ISIS buckled under military pressure, terrorism deaths in Iraq fell by 75% in 2018, the report said.

For the first time since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, it was "no longer the country most impacted by terrorism," the report said. Afghanistan has taken over the top spot that no country wants.

Because of the increase in deaths from terrorism in Afghanistan in 2018, South Asia recorded more terror-related deaths than any other global region for the first time since 2012. Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the second-highest number of deaths from terrorism, overtaking the Middle East and North Africa for the first time since 2014.

Six of the 13 terror groups or movements that were responsible for more than 100 deaths in 2018 were in sub-Saharan Africa, the report said.

Terrorism's economic impact was also on the decline in 2018, falling 38% from its 2017 level to \$33 billion, according to the report.

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# 2 Army aviators killed in Afghanistan crash ID'd

By JOHN VANDIVER  
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon identified two Fort Hood-based soldiers, Chief Warrant Officer 2 David C. Knadle and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kirk T. Fuchigami Jr., as the service members killed in a Wednesday helicopter crash in Afghanistan.

Both soldiers died while on a mission in Logar province, where their helicopter crashed while providing security for troops on the ground, the Pentagon said in a statement Thursday. The incident is under investigation.

Fuchigami Jr., 25, was from Keauau, Hawaii. Knadle, 33, was from Tarrant, Texas. Both soldiers were Apache helicopter pilots assigned to 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Fuchigami's wife, McKenzie, called her spouse "a strong, courageous soldier and loyal husband."

"Eight months of marriage with him was the best months of my life. He taught me so much about love and respect," she

wrote in a Facebook post. "I'm blessed to have been loved by him so fiercely."

Linda Knadle Rodante, who identified herself as Knadle's aunt, said in a Facebook post Wednesday that the soldier was married with two children.

"Our heartfelt condolences go to both families and their friends during this difficult time," said Lt. Col. Adam Camarano, the soldiers' battalion commander, who added in a statement that Fuchigami and Knadle "will always be remembered as a part of the heroic legacy of the 1st Cavalry Division."

The Taliban claimed to have shot down the helicopter in a statement Wednesday. However, Fawad Aman, Afghan Defense Ministry deputy spokesman, denied the claim and said the crash occurred due to a technical problem with the aircraft.



Fuchigami Jr.



Knadle

The crash destroyed the helicopter, which was participating in a night raid, said Deedar Lawang, a Logar province spokesman.

There have been 19 U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan in 2019, the deadliest year for American troops in the country since international

combat operations ended in late 2014. Most of the 20,000 international troops now in the country are focused on training and advising Afghan security forces, with a smaller contingent taking part in a counterterrorism mission.

The U.S. military deaths Wednesday are the first reported in Afghanistan since Sept. 16, when Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Griffin, 41, was killed by small-arms fire during combat in central Wardak province.

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## 2 die in T-38 crash at Oklahoma base

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two airmen were killed Thursday morning in a crash of jet trainers at Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma, according to service officials.

The officials said the airmen died in a mishap that occurred during a routine training mission involving two T-38C Talon aircraft. They said two airmen were in each aircraft when the incident occurred just after 9 a.m. local time. Officials did not provide the status of the two airmen who survived or indicate the nature of the crash.

"Vance emergency response personnel are on scene to treat casualties and assist in recovery efforts," according to a statement from the base. It added an Air Force team would launch an in-

vestigation into the incident.

Vance AFB is about 90 miles north of Oklahoma City and is home to an undergraduate pilot training program.

Student pilots training to fly fighter jets or bombers typically fly the T-38Cs during the third and final stage of their undergraduate training program, according to the Air Force. The T-38C is a Northrup Grumman-built twin-engine, supersonic-jet trainer that has been used by the Air Force since 2001, and it is scheduled to be replaced by a new jet trainer in the coming years. Versions of the T-38 have been used as the Air Force's primary jet training aircraft since the 1960s, and the service claims more than 70,000 pilots have trained using the plane.

In 2018, Boeing was awarded a \$9.2 billion contract to build T-X

aircraft to replace the Air Force's T-38Cs. That contract calls for 350 of the new trainer jets to be ready for full operational deployment by 2034.

Five T-38s crashed between November 2017 and November 2018, including one from Vance AFB in August 2018. Two of those crashes during that time were fatal.

Air Force Capt. Paul J. Barbour was killed when his jet experienced total hydraulic failure in November 2017 at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas, according to an investigation into the wreck.

Another Laughlin-based T-38C crashed in November 2018, killing Air Force Capt. John Graziano. That crash was blamed on a compressor stall, the Air Force reported in June following an investigation.

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## Trident: Senior DOD officials advised Trump against reversing rank reduction

### FROM FRONT PAGE

It was not immediately clear whether Trump's directive applies to him as well.

A spokesperson for Green could not immediately be reached for comment Thursday morning.

An attorney for Gallagher, Tim Parlato, said the last sentence

of Trump's tweet indicates to him that the president wants Green to move on from intervening in the cases for each SEAL.

"This whole thing was a political show by a petulant child, and I think the president saw through that," Parlato said of the admiral.

Gallagher's trial exposed

wrongdoing on the part of other SEALs, including MacNeil drinking with junior sailors on deployment.

The Defense Department last week announced that Trump had authorized a reversal of a rank reduction for Gallagher and pardons for two soldiers also accused of war crimes, a move that de-

fied advice from senior Pentagon leaders.

The intervention was hailed by supporters of the men but criticized by current and former military officers who cautioned it could diminish the deterrent power of military justice and damage discipline in the ranks.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper

was among the senior officials who made the case to Trump for letting the military justice system proceed uninterrupted. But the president appears to have concurred with advocates for the men affected by last week's decision who argued that troops undertaking dangerous missions deserve the nation's understanding.



## NATION

# Giuliani efforts focused on Bidens, key witnesses say

By LISA MASCARO,  
MARY CLARE JALONICK  
AND ERIC TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Key impeachment witnesses said Thursday it was clear that Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani was pursuing political investigations of Democrats in Ukraine. Their testimony undercuts the president's argument he only wanted to root out Ukrainian corruption.

State Department official David Holmes said he understood that Giuliani's push to investigate "Burisma," the Ukraine gas company where Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board, was code for the former vice president and his family. Former White House adviser Fiona Hill warned that Giuliani had been making "explosive" and "incendiary" claims.

"He was clearly pushing forward issues and ideas that would, you know, probably come back to haunt us and in fact," Hill testified. "I think that's where we are today."

Testimony from Hill and Holmes capped an intense week in the historic inquiry. The House probe focuses on allegations that Trump sought investigations of Joe Biden and his son — and the discredited idea that Ukraine rather than Russia interfered in the 2016 U.S. election — in return for U.S. military aid that Ukraine needed to fend off Russian aggression, and for a White House visit the new Ukrainian president wanted that would demonstrate his backing from the West.

Hill, a former White House Russia analyst, sternly warned Republican lawmakers, and implicitly Trump — to quit pushing the "fictional" Ukraine-interference narrative as they defend Trump in the impeachment inquiry.

Holmes, a late addition to the staff, testified that Giuliani went forward after overhearing Trump ask about "investigations" during a "colorful" phone call with Ambassador Gordon Sondland at a

**'My recollection is that Ambassador Sondland stated, 'Every time Rudy gets involved he goes and f---s everything up.''**

David Holmes  
State Department official

Kyiv restaurant this summer.

Holmes said he realized his firsthand account of what he heard would be relevant.

"Those events potentially bore on the question of whether the president did, in fact, have knowledge that those senior officials were using the levers of our diplomatic power" to push Ukraine to investigate his rivals, he testified.

As Holmes was delivering opening remarks, explaining how the ambassador "winced," holding the cellphone away from his ear because the president was talking so loudly, Trump tried to undercut the career diplomat's account of overhearing the conversation.

The president tweeted that while his own hearing is "great" he's never been able to understand another person's conversation that wasn't on speaker. "Try it," he suggested.

Holmes also testified about his growing concern as Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer, orchestrated Ukraine policy outside official diplomatic channels. It was a concern shared by others, he testified.

"My recollection is that Ambassador Sondland stated, 'Every time Rudy gets involved he goes and f---s everything up.'"

The president instructed his top diplomats to work with Giuliani, who was publicly pursuing investigations into Democrats, according to Sondland and others testifying during the week of

blockbuster public hearings.

Holmes testified that he grew alarmed, watching as Giuliani was "making frequent public statements pushing for Ukraine to investigate interference in the 2016 election and issues related to Burisma and the Bidens."

The landmark House impeachment inquiry was sparked after another call, on July 25, in which Trump asked Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for "a favor," the investigations. A still-anonymous whistleblower's official government complaint about that call led the House to launch the current probe.

Hill was an aide to former national security adviser John Bolton and stressed that she is "nonpartisan" and has worked under Republican and Democratic presidents. She appealed to the GOP to stop peddling an alternative theory of the 2016 election. She contended that Russia wanted to delegitimize "our entire presidency," whether the winner be Trump or Hillary Clinton.

"This is exactly what the Russian government was hoping for," she said about the currently divisive American political climate. "They would pit one side of our electorate against the others."

She warned that Russia is gearing up to intervene again in the 2020 U.S. election.

"I would ask that you please not promote politically driven falsehoods that so clearly advance Russian interests," Hill said in prepared opening remarks to the House Intelligence Committee.

Trump as well as Republicans on the panel, including ranking GOP Rep. Devin Nunes, of California, continue to advance the idea that Russian interference was a "hoax," and that it was Ukraine that was trying to swing the election, part of a desperate effort by Democrats to stop Trump's presidency.

Trump has told others testifying in the inquiry that Ukraine tried to "take me down" in the 2016 election.

But Hill said the conclusion by U.S. intelligence agencies that



SUSAN WALSH/AP

David Holmes, a U.S. diplomat in Ukraine, told the members of the House Intelligence Committee on Thursday that he came forward after overhearing President Donald Trump ask about "investigations" during a phone call with Ambassador Gordon Sondland in Kyiv.



ANDREW HARRIN/AP

In her testimony before the committee, former White House national security aide Fiona Hill appealed to the GOP to stop peddling an alternative theory of the 2016 U.S. election and warned that Russia is gearing up to intervene again in the 2020 election.

Russia meddled in the U.S. election "is beyond dispute."

She said, "I refuse to be part of an effort to legitimize an alternative narrative that the Ukrainian government is a U.S. adversary, and that Ukraine — not Russia — attacked us in 2016," she said.

Holmes, speaking about the July 26 call between Trump

and Sondland, the day after the president's call with Zelenskyy, has told investigators he heard Trump ask, "So he's going to do the investigation?"

According to Holmes, Sondland replied that Zelenskyy "will, quote, 'do anything you ask him to.'"

## GOP support for Trump shows no overt signs of cracking

By ALAN FRAM  
AND ANDREW TAYLOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional Republican support for President Donald Trump is showing no overt signs of bucking, the latest demonstration of how the Democrats' impeachment inquiry has left the two parties dwelling in different political universes.

Democrats have revealed in Ambassador Gordon Sondland's testimony that Trump was requesting a "quid pro quo" — specifically, a public Ukrainian commitment to investigate Democrats in ex-

change for a Trump Oval Office meeting that their newly elected president badly wanted.

Yet GOP lawmakers said Sondland's revelations about how Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani had delivered Trump's demands to diplomats hadn't changed their minds. Sondland told the House Intelligence Committee on Wednesday that he and others realized later that Ukrainian investigations were also Trump's price for the embattled country to receive U.S. military aid already approved by Congress.

"A meeting, which is a non-

ing-thing," Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said of one of Trump's demands. "The president can meet with whoever he wants to meet with, for a good reason or no reason at all."

"None of this" has risen to level of meriting Trump's impeachment, said Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind. "And I'm pretty certain that's what most of my cohorts in the Senate are thinking."

Even so, Republicans remain guarded about how voters will react to Sondland's revelations and what fresh disclosures might emerge.

Polling has shown that while public opinion has shifted recently toward slightly backing Trump's impeachment, Democrats strongly support the effort while Republicans vehemently oppose it. Independents have been divided.

"The question is, is this information enough to disrupt the equilibrium or not?" David Winston, a pollster who works with congressional Republicans, said of Sondland's testimony. Winston said it "takes a lot" for people who have strong opinions on a subject to change them.

Republicans acknowledged they would be watching for the results of fresh polls and focus groups and monitoring the attention the inquiry receives back home.

For now, they said, there seems to be little shifting of people's views and a sense that Democrats' case against Trump is complicated and unwieldy for people to digest.

"I think this is a pretty boring reality show. It's not going to get a second season," said Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla.

## NATION



A Ukrainian soldier passes a destroyed Butovka coal mine as he approaches his front line position in the town of Avdiivka in the Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Tuesday.

## Line: US equipment key on front lines in Ukraine

### FROM FRONT PAGE

The holdup in aid wasn't something palpable that immediately affected the Ukrainian troops in action; it had more of a psychological impact, raising fears here that the U.S. was turning its back on Ukraine. The aid was later released, but the scandal has effectively frozen U.S.-Ukrainian relations and thrown long-term U.S. backing into doubt.

"We need support, and without support of our allies we won't win this war," Pokotylo said.

Avdiivka feels a world away from Washington. A soldier works his trench with a pickaxe. Another hangs wet laundry in the damp chill. Another cleans his Kalashnikov rifle with a piece of old rag.

While the U.S. aid helped fill some of the gaps in Ukraine's military capability, with counter-mortar radars being one highly welcome addition, its army continues to rely on aging Soviet-era weapons and often lacks essential supplies.

On the other side of the front line, separatists work from a similar, Soviet-made arsenal.

After large-scale battles involving tanks and long-range artillery early in the conflict, fighting has devolved into an oddity primitive standoff, with both sides stuck in trenches and occasionally exchanging artillery salvos and gunfire. Ukraine used warplanes and helicopter gunships early on,

but it grounded them after heavy losses from anti-aircraft fire.

Strategically located near the airport of regional capital Donetsk and home to Ukraine's main coke and chemical plant, Avdiivka was seized by separatists at the start of the 2014 uprising, then recaptured by Ukrainian forces a few months later.

Heavy fighting erupted again in 2017, and Avdiivka remains a key spot on the front. About 10 days ago, two Ukrainian soldiers were killed by light artillery fire as they unloaded firepower from their vehicle.

"Sometimes it's scary. Sometimes it's so dark that you can't see yourself, can't see your hand in front of you. You might get scared when you walk down the trenches at night. The trenches are long," said Kyrylo, a 21-year-old soldier who spoke on condition that his last name not be used for security reasons.

"My family is in danger. My loved ones," said Kyrylo, who's says he's fighting to protect his wife and 10-month-old daughter.

"I want all my comrades to survive," he said, his eyes welling up. "Many die."

National symbolism is ubiquitous around the trenches — a Ukrainian trident hanging on a wooden pillar, a Ukrainian flag spread on a table. The day-to-day rituals are tedious, and the ambience is subdued but tense, as gunfire can erupt at any moment.



Above: A Ukrainian soldier is seen in a trench in the front line near the town of Avdiivka in the Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Monday. Left: A Ukrainian soldier demonstrates a sniper rifle in a trench at the front line in a destroyed Butovka coal mine near the town of Avdiivka.

PHOTOS BY VITALI KOMAR/AP

The war began in 2014, after Ukraine's former Moscow-friendly president was driven from office by massive protests on Kyiv's Maidan square. In retaliation and in fear of Western encroachment on what it sees as its geopolitical backyard, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and helped foment an insurgency in eastern Ukraine. Many in the separatist-held areas see Russia as their more natural trading partner and backer than the United States, while many elsewhere in Ukraine lean firmly toward the West.

The centerpiece of the lethal U.S. military aid provided by the Trump administration are Javelin anti-tank missiles. They're not being used in the field, soldiers say, but serve as a deterrent, a

symbol of U.S. power and support — and a confidence-booster for Ukrainian troops.

Soldiers say U.S. helmets saved lives early in the war, and U.S. medical equipment is especially prized.

In Avdiivka, soldier Yevhen Hlushko carefully guards his U.S. first-aid kit, with its decompression needle and compact tourniquet.

"The quality of emergency medical treatment depends on what's in the first-aid kit," he said.

Shiny green U.S.-made tents serve as a triage point for a hospital in Chasiv Yar, farther north along the front, where radiologist Oleh Kyryiak X-rays a soldier's chest, and a colleague uses an

American ultrasound machine to monitor a patient's heart.

"The American equipment is higher quality than ours. Of course, we'd like to have help from the U.S., friendly relations," Kyryiak said.

Ukrainians at the front have another worry: That the U.S. impeachment drama has weakened Zelenskyy so much that he'll cede too much to Russian President Vladimir Putin in peace talks in Paris next month.

"Our guys died in droves — what was that for?" asked Dmytro, a soldier whose hometown of Popasna was captured by separatists for several months in 2014. "For Ukraine, victory at the end of the war is if we get the territory back."

## Official: Ukraine asked about aid on day of Trump call

BY ANDREW TAYLOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a blow to GOP defenses of President Donald Trump, a Defense Department official said Wednesday the Ukrainian government asked "what was going on" with U.S. military aid as early as July 25 — the very day that Trump asked Ukraine's president to investigate Democrats.

Testifying in an evening hearing, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper told lawmakers her staff recently

showed her emails that she had not yet seen when she testified behind closed doors last month in the impeachment probe looking into Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

Cooper said her staff received an email on July 25 from a Ukrainian embassy contact asking "what was going on with Ukraine's security assistance." She said she "cannot say for certain" that Ukraine was aware the aid was being withheld, but said "it's the recollection of my staff that they likely knew."

Republicans have argued there couldn't be a "quid pro quo" — investigations into

Democrats for military aid — if Ukrainians weren't aware of a hold on the aid.

"Your testimony today destroys two of the pillars of the president's defense," said Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif. "The first pillar: No harm no foul. The Ukrainians didn't know that the hold was in place, so it didn't really hurt them. The second pillar: This president was a real champion of anti-corruption."

Trump's July 25 call with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy occurred in the morning in Washington. After Zelenskyy pressed for the military aid, Trump suggested

Ukraine "look into" Joe Biden and his son Hunter, who was on the board of a huge Ukrainian natural gas company.

In addition to the email from the Ukrainian Embassy, Cooper testified that her staff also received two emails from the State Department that afternoon of July 25.

One said "that the Ukrainian Embassy and House Foreign Affairs Committee are asking about security assistance." A second email said "the Hill knows about the (military aid) situation to an extent and so does the Ukrainian Embassy."

## NATION

# Dems spar over health care, beating Trump

By BILL BARROW, WILL WEISSERT and JILL COLVIN  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Democratic presidential candidates clashed in a debate over the future of health care in America, racial inequality and their ability to build a winning coalition to take on President Donald Trump next year.

The Wednesday night faceoff came after hours of testimony in the impeachment inquiry of Trump and at a critical juncture in the Democratic race to run against him in 2020. With less than three months before the first voting contests, big questions hang over the front-runners, time is running out for lower tier candidates to make their move and new Democrats are launching improbable last-minute bids for the nomination.

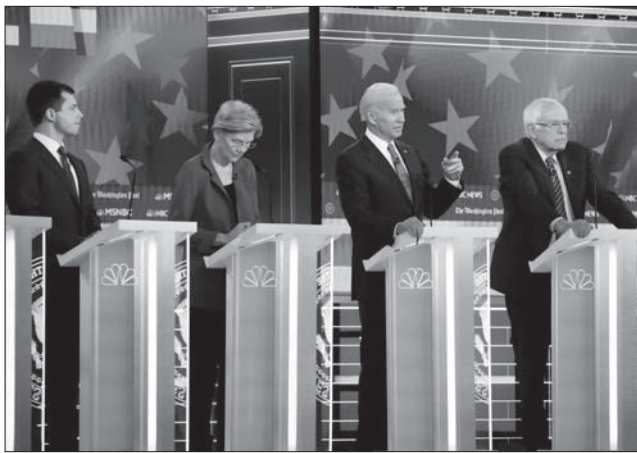
But amid the turbulence, the White House hopefuls often found themselves fighting on well-trodden terrain, particularly over whether the party should embrace a sweeping "Medicare for All" program or make more modest changes to the current health care system.

Sens. Elizabeth Warren, of Massachusetts, and Bernie Sanders, of Vermont, the field's most progressive voices, staunchly defended Medicare for All, which would eliminate private insurance coverage in favor of a government-run system.

"The American people understand that the current health care system is not only cruel, it is dysfunctional," Sanders said.

Former Vice President Joe Biden countered that many people are happy with private insurance through their jobs, while Mayor Pete Buttigieg, of South Bend, Ind., complained about other candidates seeking to take "the divisive step" of ordering people into universal health care "whether they like it or not."

Democrats successfully campaigned on health care last year, winning control of the House on a message that Republicans were slashing existing benefits. But moderates worry that Medicare for All is more complicated and may not pay the same political



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

**Democratic presidential candidates, from left, South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg; Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.; former Vice President Joe Biden; and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., participate in the Democratic presidential primary debate Wednesday in Atlanta.**

dividend. That's especially true after Democrats won elections earlier this month in Kentucky and Virginia without embracing the program.

"We must get our fired-up Democratic base with us," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota. "But let's also get those independents and moderate Republicans who cannot stomach [Trump] anymore."

The fifth Democratic debate unfolded in Atlanta, a city that played a central role in the civil rights movement, and the party's diversity, including two black candidates, was on display. But there was disagreement on how best to appeal to minority voters, who are vital to winning the Democratic nomination and will be crucial in the general election.

Sens. Kamala Harris, of California, and Cory Booker, of New Jersey, said the party has sometimes come up short in its out-

reach to black Americans.

"For too long, I think, candidates have taken for granted constituencies that have been a backbone of the Democratic Party," Harris said. "You show up in a black church and want to get the vote but just haven't been there before."

Booker declared, "Black voters are pissed off, and they're worried."

In the moderators' chairs were four women, including Rachel Maddow, MSNBC's liberal darling, and Ashley Parker, a White House reporter for The Washington Post. It was only the third time a primary debate has been hosted by an all-female panel.

Buttigieg — who was a natural target given his recent rise in the polls to join Biden, Warren and Sanders among the crowded field's front-runners — was asked early about how being mayor of a city of 100,000 residents qualified

him for the White House.

"I know that from the perspective of Washington, what goes on in my city might look small," Buttigieg said. "But, frankly, where we live, the firefighting on Capitol Hill is what looks small."

Klobuchar argued that she has more experience enacting legislation and suggested that women in politics are held to a higher standard.

"Otherwise we could play a game called 'Name your favorite woman president,' which we can't do because it has all been men," she said.

Another memorable exchange occurred when Biden — who didn't face any real attacks from his rivals — was asked about curbing violence against women and responded awkwardly.

"We have to just change the culture," he said. "And keep punching at it. And punching at it."

Harris scrapped with another low polling candidate, Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, who has criticized prominent Democrats, including 2016 nominee Hillary Clinton.

"I think that it's unfortunate that we have someone on the stage who is attempting to be the Democratic nominee for the president of the United States who during the Obama administration spent four years full time on Fox News criticizing President (Barack) Obama," Harris said.

"I'm not going to put party interests first," Gabbard responded.

But the discussion kept finding its way back to Medicare for All, which has dominated the primary — especially for Warren. She released plans to raise \$20-plus trillion in new government revenue for universal health care. But she also said implementation of the program may take three years — drawing criticism both from moderates like Biden and Buttigieg, who think she's trying to distance herself from an unpopular idea, and Sanders supporters, who see the Massachusetts senator's commitment to Medicare for All wavering.

Sanders made a point of saying Wednesday that he'd send Medicare for All legislation to Congress during the first week of his administration.

Booker faced especially intense pressure Wednesday since he's yet to meet the Democratic National Committee's polling requirements for the December debate in California. He spent several minutes arguing with Warren about the need to more appropriately tax the wealthy, but also called for "building wealth" among people of color and other marginalized communities.

"We've got to start empowering people," Booker said.

Businessman Andrew Yang was asked what he would say to Russian President Vladimir Putin if he got the chance — and joked about that leader's cordial relationship with Trump.

"First of all, I'd say, 'I'm sorry I beat your guy,'" Yang said with a grin, drawing howls of laughter from the audience.

## Senate passes spending bill to avoid government shutdown

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed a short-term spending bill Thursday to keep the government open through late December, sending the legislation to President Donald Trump hours ahead of a midnight shutdown deadline.

The vote was 74-20. Trump was expected to sign the bill, which the House passed earlier in the week amid public impeachment hearings. Without the legislation, government funding would have expired Thursday at midnight, forcing multiple agencies to begin to close down operations and send

federal workers home.

The bill extends government funding through Dec. 20, setting up a fight over money for Trump's border wall that could happen around the very same time the House is voting on articles of impeachment against the president.

It is the second stop-gap spending bill Congress has been forced to pass to keep the lights on in government for the 2020 budget year that began Oct. 1.

Congress is supposed to pass 12 annual spending bills to fund the military and federal agencies, but lawmakers have yet to agree

on a single one of them for 2020. Instead, the spending process has again sunk into dysfunction, even though Congress and the White House passed a broad budget deal over the summer that extended the debt limit past the 2020 election and set top-line spending levels for the military and domestic agencies.

That deal was supposed to make it easier for Congress' spending committees to write their bills. But negotiations quickly descended into partisan bickering over the terms of the deal.

Looming over it all is Trump's

demand for billions for his border wall, the same issue that caused a record-long 35-day government shutdown last winter.

Aides have studied the possibility of diverting the money from existing funds if Congress does not approve more.

Trump and Senate Republicans want \$5 billion for the wall, but House Democrats included no money at all for the wall in the spending bills they passed. It remains unclear where a compromise might lie.

By extending funding through Dec. 20, lawmakers hope to give

themselves time to come up with a deal on that issue and others that would allow them to pass full-year bills to fund the government for the rest of the budget year that ends Sept. 30, 2020.

Hopes for such a deal look highly uncertain, but the alternative is to extend funding at current levels through the remainder of 2020, which would cause the Pentagon and domestic agencies to miss out on billions of dollars in budget increases.

That's an outcome lawmakers in both parties would like to avoid.



## NATION

# Fewer customers hit by the latest blackout in Calif.

By JANIE HAR  
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Pacific Gas & Electric turned off electricity Wednesday for about 120,000 people in Northern California to prevent power lines from sparking wildfires during a new bout of windy, warm weather.

However, favorable weather allowed the nation's largest utility to drastically reduce the number of customers it originally had planned to black out — about 375,000 — and even to begin restoring electricity in some areas.

Higher-than-expected humidity, cloud cover and even some rain showers in the Sierra Nevada helped reduce the risk, said Scott Strenfel, PG&E's principal meteorologist.

"All of these factors kind of broke in all of our favor," he said.

Virtually all those who lost power were expected to get it back Thursday once a weather all-clear is declared and ground crews and helicopters check power lines

to make sure any damage is repaired, officials said.

Forecasts had called for it to be dry and windy Wednesday, with gusts up to 55 mph, which could fling tree branches or other debris into lines and cause sparks that have the potential to set catastrophic fires, PG&E officials said. A virtually rainless fall has left brush bone dry.

The blackout is the latest in a series of massive outages by PG&E, including one last month that plunged nearly 2.5 million people into darkness and outraged officials and customers as well.

Officials accused the company of using the blackouts as a crutch after years of failure to update its infrastructure to withstand fire weather. PG&E equipment has caused some of California's most destructive wildfires in recent years.

PG&E CEO Andy Vesey acknowledged the outages have been "terribly disruptive" and



ELIAS FUNEZ, THE UNION/AP

**Dionicio Torres looks at the gas can selection at B&C Ace Home & Garden Center in Grass Valley, Calif., on Tuesday in preparation for Wednesday's public safety power shutdown.**

said the company is taking steps to avoid them in the future but that for now, "we won't roll the dice on public safety."

Meanwhile, California regulators are demanding answers from wireless, internet and land-line providers whose equipment failed during the earlier outages, leaving hundreds of thousands of people without a way to get emergency alerts or make 911 calls.

About 3% of cell towers statewide failed at one point in late

October, but the numbers were much higher in northern counties, such as Marin, which had 57% of its towers out, and Sonoma, with 27% out.

Exasperated members of the California Public Utilities Commission reminded representatives of Sprint, AT&T, Verizon and other companies that customers pay for reliable service.

"Next fire season cannot, cannot look like this one," commission President Maribel Batjer

said.

Consumer advocates have urged the commission to establish backup power requirements and make the companies provide detailed information about outage locations.

State Sen. Steve Glazer and Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan proposed legislation Wednesday that would require cellphone companies to provide at least 72 hours of backup power at cell towers.

## Ariz. border activist is acquitted

By ASTRID GALVAN  
Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — An activist was quickly acquitted Wednesday on charges he illegally harbored two Central American immigrants at a southern Arizona camp operated by a humanitarian group.

The verdict by a jury in U.S. District Court came after jurors deliberated for about two hours in what was the second trial for Scott Warren. A mistrial was declared last June after a jury deadlocked on harboring charges.

Warren was stoic after the verdict was read. "The government failed in its attempt to criminalize basic human kindness," Warren said outside of court.

The jury's quick decision came in contrast to Warren's last trial, when jurors deliberated for several days before calling it quits over a lack of consensus.

Greg Kuykendall, an attorney who defended Warren, said the new jury followed the law carefully.

"They parsed the evidence," he said. "They paid rapt attention while we were putting on our defense and while the prosecution was putting on its case, and they decided that humanitarian aid is



ASTRID GALVAN/AP

**Scott Warren, center, of Ajo, Ariz., celebrates with his attorneys, Amy Knight and Greg Kuykendall, in Tucson, Ariz., on Wednesday after being acquitted of two counts of harboring immigrants.**

not always a crime, the way the government wanted it to be."

Warren, 37, testified that neutrality guides his work near the border and denied he has ever helped migrants hide or instructed them how to avoid authorities.

Warren was arrested in January 2018 by U.S. agents who were staking out a humanitarian aid station in Arizona known as "The Barn," where two Central American men had been staying for several days. Prosecutor Nathaniel Walters said the men didn't need medical attention and questioned the authenticity of Warren's claim that he was "orienting" them before they left the camp.

The camp is run by a group that

tries to prevent immigrants from dying in the desert.

"What they needed was a place to hide, and that's what the defendant gave them, and that is an intent to violate the law," Walters said.

Warren, a member of the group No More Deaths, said the group's training and protocol prohibit advising migrants on how to elude authorities. He said his interest is in saving lives.

Michael Bailey, the U.S. attorney for Arizona, promised to continue prosecuting people who harbor and smuggle immigrants and those who sneak across the border.

## Police: Mo. mother took adult daughter from care facility, killed her

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — An elderly woman who feared she was developing dementia removed her mentally disabled adult daughter from a care facility, then fatally stabbed her in a suburban St. Louis hotel before attempting to kill herself, police and relatives say.

Marjorie Theleman, 78, was charged Tuesday with first-degree murder and armed criminal action in the death of her daughter, Sharon Theleman, 51, after police were summoned to a hotel in Fenton, Mo., because the pair had not checked out.

Sharon Theleman was pronounced dead at the scene. Her mother, who attempted to suffocate herself with a plastic bag, remained hospitalized Wednesday, according to a police news release. She left a typed note explaining her actions and a handwritten note telling housekeeping to call police, a police detective wrote in the probable cause statement.

Police said she was expected to survive. But one of her two sons, Scott Theleman, who lives in the Dallas area, said he has been told his mother is in a coma and has a "50-50 chance of surviving."

He said his mother lived in a retirement community and wanted

to have his sister moved there from a group home because his sister's mobility was declining.

"She was concerned about Alzheimer's," he said of his mother. "Her mother had it. She had spent many years trying to avoid it but felt she was heading that way."

"From what I understand, the note I haven't seen said she was doing this as a favor to her sons so we didn't have to carry the burden of a handicapped sister and declining mother," he said. "I don't approve of that at all but that's apparently what the note said."

Scott Theleman didn't say how he knew the contents of the note and police declined to comment.

Court records show that Marjorie Theleman was appointed in 1989 as a guardian for her then-21-year-old daughter, who was described as an "incapacitated person." A report filed in 2014 in the guardianship case described Sharon Theleman as mentally disabled and visually impaired.

The report also said she needed a walker or wheelchair and "cannot take care of herself." Thomas Zotos, the attorney for Marjorie Theleman in the guardianship case, said he had no recent contact with the mother or daughter and couldn't comment.

## NATION

# Data to weigh education wages, debt expanded

By COLLIN BINKLEY

Associated Press

For the first time, the U.S. Education Department has published data allowing students to compare salary and debt levels for specific college programs rather than for entire institutions only.

The information was made public Wednesday on the agency's updated College Scorecard website, which was created under the Obama administration to help students evaluate which colleges provide the best value. The update is seen as a milestone in the department's efforts to shine a light on programs that leave students with heavy debt and low incomes.

Previously, students could use the online tool to compare salary and debt averages for entire schools, benchmarks that the Ed-

ucation Department now says are "fairly meaningless." Students today can sort through specific majors within a school and see how they stack up against one another, or against programs at other schools, and see which ones lead to the highest salaries or the lowest debt.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said the new tool provides "real information students need to make informed, personalized decisions about their education." By providing the same statistics for all institutions, she said, students can compare any programs they are considering "without regard to the type of school."

The website allows students to search for a specific school or to browse by field of study or degree type.

It offers information on schools from Ivy League universities to

vocational schools and certificate programs.

There are some drawbacks. The earnings data are available for only 20% of the 200,000 programs listed in the department's database, while others are hidden for privacy reasons because they had few students.

The earnings figures were measured a year after graduation and reflect students who received federal loans or Pell grants only. They do not count students with no earnings.

Still, the effort was applauded by advocacy groups and scholars who have long awaited better data on college outcomes. Chiefs for Change, a nonprofit that represents city and state education leaders, said the sites give students important input when deciding what to do after high school.

"With information about average debt and earnings, students will have a better sense of the potential return on their investment in higher education," Mike Magee, the organization's CEO, said in a statement.

DeVos promised to expand the College Scorecard in August 2018 as she repealed an Obama-era rule requiring the department to publish earnings and debt data on career training programs that were primarily housed at for-profit colleges. That rule aimed to cut federal money for programs that repeatedly left students strapped with heavy debt and low incomes.

But DeVos said the rule unfairly targeted the for-profit sector and used flawed data. Instead, she said students should get equal information about all types of schools and make decisions about

where to attend on their own.

Researchers are beginning to dig into the new data on the site, and many expect discussions about which types of schools are helping students and which aren't.

One early finding is that pays to be a dentist. Nine of the 10 highest median salaries a year after graduation were for dentistry programs, topped by Ohio State University at \$231,200. Those programs also carried heavy debt, with an average of about \$200,000 in the top 10 programs.

There were also more than 100 programs in which the median debt was more than four times greater than the median salary, including some film, drama and visual arts programs at prestigious schools such as Columbia University and New York University.

## Hundreds of protesters rally against Berkeley speech by Ann Coulter

By JACLYN COSGROVE

AND SHELLEY GRAD

Los Angeles Times

Hundreds of protesters converged on UC Berkeley on Wednesday night as conservative author Ann Coulter delivered a speech on campus.

UC Berkeley police said on Twitter that "multiple masked protesters" were arrested at the event but did not provide details about why they were taken into custody.

Videos and photos show large groups of protesters outside the venue where Coulter was speaking, with some signs calling her a fascist and saying she should go home.

The Berkeley College Republicans invited Coulter for a talk entitled, "Adios, America!" Ad-

vertising said the writer would discuss the "current United States immigration system and the dangers of mass immigration."

Protesters said she had no place at the university.

"The university is rolling (out) the red carpet for these fascist speakers to come and spew their hate," demonstrator Alex Hernandez told NBC Bay Area.

Coulter had intended to speak on the campus in 2017, but her event was canceled due to security concerns.

Earlier that year, the College Republicans sought to host right-wing provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos, but the event was canceled when hundreds of demonstrators swarmed the venue — including some in masks who tore down barricades and smashed windows.



NOAH BERGER/AP

Police officers guard attendees leaving a speech by conservative commentator Ann Coulter on Wednesday in Berkeley, Calif.

## Utah woman fights sex offender charge after her stepkids see her topless

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah woman charged with a crime after her stepchildren saw her topless in her own home is fighting the case that could force her to register as a sex offender, citing a court ruling that overturned a topless ban in Colorado.

Attorneys for Tili Buchanan argue that the law is unfair because it treats men and women differently for baring their chests. They are asking a judge to overturn her misdemeanor lewdness charges and declare that part of the law unconstitutional.

Prosecutors counter that nudity is commonly understood to include women's breasts in Amer-

ican society and that courts have upheld laws based on morality.

Judge Kara Pettit heard the case Tuesday but said it was "too important of an issue" to decide immediately. She plans to rule in the coming months.

Buchanan said she and her husband had taken off their shirts to keep their clothes from getting dusty while they worked in their garage in late 2017 or early 2018.

When the children, ages 9 through 13, walked in, she "explained she considers herself a feminist and wanted to make a point that everybody should be fine with walking around their house or elsewhere with skin showing," her lawyers said in court documents.

Buchanan was charged with three counts of misdemeanor lewdness involving a child in February. It came after child welfare officials began an investigation involving the kids that was tied to Buchanan, and the children's mother reported the incident to authorities because she was "alarmed."

Buchanan's husband was not charged.

"It was in the privacy of my own home. My husband was right next to me in the same exact manner that I was, and he's not being prosecuted," she said after the court hearing.

If convicted, Buchanan could be required to register as a sex offender for 10 years.



LEAN HOOSTEN, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE/AP

Tili Buchanan smiles as she leaves a courtroom Tuesday in Salt Lake City, where she is charged with lewdness for being topless in front of her stepchildren. Her attorneys argued that Utah's lewdness statute discriminates against women.

## NATION

# Farmers explore unfamiliar terrain of legalized hemp

By DAVID EGGERT  
Associated Press

CLAYTON TOWNSHIP, Mich. — Dave Crabill and two business partners started small for their first foray into farming hemp, growing two strains of the now-legal cousin of marijuana on an acre along a dirt road outside the industrial city of Flint.

The endeavor was not easy. Flooding from record rain stunted some plants. Crabill and others had to carefully walk the field and uproot 1,000 undesirable males, a third of the plants, to protect more valuable females. Some plants were stolen. And it's still not clear whether they will make money from the effort, which Crabill likened to "planting \$20 bills and hoping to harvest \$50."

"That's why we did the one acre," said Crabill, who runs a small marketing company and is among more than 500 people who registered this year as hemp growers in Michigan, many hoping to capitalize on the growing demand for the extract CBD. "Something managers like me can make mistakes and it won't kill us. ... We're all going to be smarter next year."

The legalization of industrial hemp in the U.S. less than a year ago has sparked interest from both traditional farmers and newcomers like Crabill. The early stages are proving tricky, but up for grabs is a lucrative market, one that could grow more than fivefold globally by 2025 — driven by demand for CBD. The compound, which doesn't cause a high like that of marijuana, is hyped as a health product to reduce anxiety, treat pain and promote sleep.

The U.S. is the biggest hemp-importing country, and even before the cannabis plant was fully legalized federally, some states ran pilot programs under the 2014 farm bill. Last month, the U.S. government finalized an interim national regulatory framework that is expected to pave the way for the crop's widespread commercialization starting as early as 2020.

In Michigan, farmers who participated in the state's first growing season since World War II cover the gamut — including cannabis enthusiasts and large-scale operators who want to diversify beyond low-price commodities.

For attorney Keith Hagen and his two farmer brothers, branching out past sugar beets, wheat and dry beans was primarily a financial decision. They founded Hempure Farm in Uby and grew 340 acres of hemp, the most statewide.

"There's not a lot of money being made in any crop right now. The margins are so small ... and then you start piling on tariffs and these margins even get smaller," Hagen said. "So when something new like hemp popped up, well they've got the agricultural expertise. It then just turned into a matter of learning as much as you can on how to do this."

Producing hemp, especially for CBD extraction, is labor-intensive. Obtaining high-quality seeds can be difficult and expensive. Weed control is an issue; little is known about safely or legally using pesticides.

Before a crop is harvested, it's tested for THC, the chemical in cannabis that causes a high. If the level is "hot," above 0.3%, the



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Jeff Dennings, left, and Dave Crabill, industrial hemp farmers, check plants at their farm in Clayton Township, Mich., on Aug. 21.

**"They've got the agricultural expertise. It then just turned into a matter of learning as much as you can on how to do this."**

Keith Hagen  
attorney

plants must be destroyed.

"It's incredibly complicated," Hagen said, pointing to "countless minefields" facing farmers, many of whom "will probably lose their shirt, for lack of a better term."

Vote Hemp says more than 30 states issued 17,800 licenses to farmers and researchers in the wake of hemp's legalization, more than quintuple the 2018 figure.

Of the half a million acres covered, though, an estimated 295,000 weren't planted because of limited access to seedlings and clones, a lack of financing and a "huge number" of inexperienced growers, according to the nonprofit advocacy group. It estimates that about 50% to 60%

of the planted acres, or 120,000 to 144,000, will be harvested, once crop failures, noncompliant plants and other factors are factored in.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's newly issued interim rules to facilitate hemp production will provide much-needed guidance on testing, background checks and other issues.

The industry also is closely tracking the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Though products containing CBD are already in stores and sold online, the agency says CBD-infused foods, drinks and dietary supplements are illegal. It's exploring ways that the compound might officially be allowed.

"There is a bit of a medicinal market and there is a bit of an almost salon-type market," said Hagen, who expects to produce about 1.5 million dried pounds of hemp this year for use in products such as lotions and oils. "The real launching point, though, is when the FDA allows CBD to be put into real consumable products. That's where we'll really see what this can do."

Ron Bates, director of the Michigan State University Extension's Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute, said that would-be growers should have contracts in place in advance.

"You just don't harvest this stuff and take it to the elevator and sell it," he said. "The market infrastructure's just not there yet."

For now, many states are playing catch-up.

"This is really a learning year for everybody," said Gina Alesandri, Michigan's industrial hemp program director. "There still are a lot more questions than answers for many people."

## Firm that sold cadavers for tests without consent must pay \$58M

By MEAGAN FLYNN  
The Washington Post

The body broker arrived to pick up Jim Stauffer's mother within 45 minutes of her death.

Stauffer wanted to donate his mom's body to science, hoping the Biological Resource Center in Phoenix, Ariz., could turn his mother's brain over for Alzheimer's research. He filled out the paperwork and, just 10 days later, received her ashes in a wooden box.

But at the time, in 2013, Stauffer didn't know that the ashes he received were from his mother's hand only. He didn't know, as Reuters would later discover, that the rest of her body had been shipped to the Army for a Penta-

gon experiment — to be used as a test dummy in an IED blast.

"She was then supposedly strapped in a chair on some sort of apparatus and a detonator took place underneath her to basically get an idea of what the human body goes through when a vehicle is hit by an IED," Stauffer told KNCX in July.

The painful revelation would lead Stauffer to join more than 20 others in a lawsuit against the Biological Resource Center alleging fraud and deception. On Tuesday, after years of litigation, the civil trial finally came to a close.

In Maricopa County Superior Court, a jury awarded \$58 million in damages to the plaintiffs, finding that the Phoenix body donation company and its owner

deceived the families into donating their loved ones' bodies only for the bodies to end up dismembered and distributed for profit all over the country. Ten out of 21 plaintiffs were awarded the damages, which included \$50 million in punitive damages and \$8 million in compensatory damages, although a full list of exactly which plaintiffs were awarded the money was not immediately available.

A lawyer for the plaintiffs, Michael Burg, said in a statement that the case was a first of its kind in the body-broking business, expressing hope that the verdict would send a message to the rest of the industry about the consequences for deceiving body donors.

"The selling of human remains is an underground industry that most people don't know about," Burg said. "These funeral homes defrauded grieving families by obtaining the remains of their loved ones and then selling body parts on the black market."

"It was an honor to help bring an element of closure to the families who have suffered from the horrific actions of these individuals."

During the trial, Biological Resource Center's attorney, Timothy O'Connor, argued that the plaintiffs signed consent agreements that said bodies could be "disarticulated," and stressed that dismembering a body "doesn't mean it hasn't been treated with dignity and respect," the Arizona Repub-

lic reported.

Tuesday's verdict comes after a yearslong, cross-country investigation that has since resulted in multiple convictions and numerous lawsuits against body brokers working in the shadowy world of cadaver dealing.

Biological Resource Center's owner, Stephen Gore, was convicted in 2015 of running an illegal enterprise for selling body parts from people with infectious diseases to unwitting buyers. He was sentenced to four years of probation.

While body parts may be sold for research, it's illegal to sell infected body parts or to deceive the families donating the body about how it will be used. Gore was accused of doing both.



## NATION

# Butterfly on a bomb range

## Endangered Species Act in action at Fort Bragg

By SETH BORENSTEIN  
Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — In the unlikely setting of the world's most populated military installation, amid all the regimented chaos, you'll find the Endangered Species Act at work.

There, as a 400-pound explosive resounds in the distance, a tiny St. Francis Satyr butterfly flits among the leaves, ready to lay as many as 100 eggs. At one point, this brown and frankly dull-looking butterfly could be found in only one place on Earth: Fort Bragg's artillery range.

Now, thanks in great measure to the 46-year-old federal act, they are found in eight more places — though all of them are on other parts of the Army base. If all goes well, biologists will have just seeded habitat No. 10.

One of Earth's rarest butterfly species, there are maybe 3,000 St. Francis Satyrs. There are never going to be enough of them to get off the endangered list, but they're not about to go extinct either. They are permanent patients of the bureaucratic conservation hospital ward.

In some ways, the tiny butterfly is an ideal example of the more than 1,600 U.S. species that have been protected by the Endangered Species Act. It's alive, but not exactly doing that well.

To some experts, just having these creatures around means the law has done its job. More than 99.2% of the species protected by the act survive, The Associated Press has found. Only 11 species were declared extinct.

On the other hand, only 39 U.S. species — about 2% of the overall number — have made it off the endangered list because of recovery, including bald eagles and American alligators.

"Species will remain in the Endangered Species Act hospital indefinitely. And I don't think that's a failure of the Endangered Species Act itself," said Jake Li, director for biodiversity at the Environmental Policy Innovation Center in Washington.

### A last resort

The Endangered Species Act "is the safety net of last resort," said Gary Frazer, assistant director of ecological services at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers the law. "We list species after all other vehicles of protection have failed."

The 1973 law, passed unanimously in the Senate, was designed to prevent species from going extinct and to protect their habitat. Under the law, it is unlawful to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect" endangered animals and plants, and it also forbids the elimination of their habitats.

Another species found at Fort Bragg — the red-cockaded woodpecker — is a case of success but at a cost of \$408 million over 19 years.

The woodpeckers live only in longleaf pines, which have been disappearing across the Southeast for more than a century due to development and to suppression of fires.

In the 1980s and 1990s, efforts to save the woodpecker and their trees set off a backlash among landowners who worried about interference on their private property. Wildlife officials were even shot at.

Army officials weren't happy either.

"We couldn't maneuver. We couldn't shoot because they were afraid the bird was going to blink out and go into extinction," said former top Fort Bragg planning official Mike Lynch.



PHOTOS BY ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Research assistants David Pavlik, left, and Emily Price roll out an inflatable rubber dam in an effort to create habitat suitable for the rare St. Francis's satyr butterfly at Fort Bragg in North Carolina in July.



Wildlife biologist Brian Ball, protected by a safety harness, examines a nesting cavity used by a red-cockaded woodpecker at Fort Bragg.

By the 1980s, the red cockaded woodpecker population was below 10,000 nationwide. Now, they're well past 15,000 just on military bases.

After failed efforts, biologists and bureaucrats changed their approach.

Instead of prohibiting work on land the woodpeckers need, Fish and Wildlife Service officials allowed landowners to make some changes as long as they generally didn't hurt the bird. The Army set fires to regularly burn scrub.

The result? When Fort Bragg Endangered Species Branch Chief Jackie Britcher started, in 1983, there were fewer than 300 woodpecker families on Fort Bragg. Now she counts 453 families.

"Something is going right," she said. The Army has better land to maneuver and the community is taking pride in the woodpecker, Lynch said.

### Ideal conditions

From 1998 to 2016, the federal government tallied \$20.5 billion in spending on

individual species on the endangered list. That's based on an annual per-species spending report that the Fish and Wildlife Service sends to Congress, but that tally is not comprehensive.

Seven species, mostly fish, ate up more than half of the money expended under the act, according to the annual accounting figures. About \$3 million was spent to save the St. Francis Satyr butterfly.

Nick Haddad, a Michigan State University butterfly biologist and St. Francis expert, regularly visits the artillery range.

He expected a moonscape, but found beauty.

Because no one was venturing into the woods there, no one was dismantling beaver dams or snuffing out fires. Aside from munition fragments, the landscape was much like North Carolina before it was altered by humans.

The picky butterfly needs a touch of chaos in its habitat. It requires water, but not a lot. It thrives on fire to burn away overgrown plants, but not too much.



A St. Francis's satyr butterfly rests on a leaf in a swamp at Fort Bragg.

Now, Haddad and his team replicate those conditions elsewhere on base, and they watch the butterfly population grow.

### Having an impact

After years of criticisms from conservatives that the endangered species program is too cumbersome for industry and landowners, President Donald Trump's administration has enacted 33 different reforms.

Among them is a change in the rules for species that are "threatened," the classification just below endangered. Instead of mandating, in most cases, that they get the same protection as endangered species, the new rules allow for variations.

That is better management, said the Fish and Wildlife Service's Frazer, adding, "It allows us to regulate really only those things that are important to conservation."

Noah Greenwald, endangered species director of the Center for Biological Diversity, characterizes the regulations as "a disaster."

While scientists across the globe warn of the coming extinction of a million species in the decades ahead, Haddad is determined that the St. Francis Satyr butterfly won't be one of them.

"This is the thing that gives me hope," Haddad said. "That's where the Endangered Species Act had an impact."

## WORLD

# Protests may affect Hong Kong vote

BY EILEEN NG  
AND ANDI JATMIKO  
Associated Press

**HONG KONG** — More than 20 protesters inside a Hong Kong university campus surrendered to police on Thursday as the city's largest pro-Beijing political party urged voters to "kick out the black force" in upcoming elections seen as a key gauge of public support for anti-government demonstrations.

At least 23 people left Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which has been ringed by riot police for days, as the campus siege edged closer to an end.

Ten protesters walked out together and were escorted to a police post outside the campus, while three were carried out on stretchers and four taken in wheelchairs. Five other students, believed to be minors, came out with their parents and were allowed to leave after police took their details.

The city's largest political party slammed the flareup in violence in the past week and urged some 4.1 million voters to use the ballot box this Sunday to reject the "black force" that had thrived the semi-autonomous Chinese territory into unprecedented turmoil since June.

"The black force say we should not fight for freedom but now people cannot even express their views freely," said Starry Lee, who heads the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong. "We have even been stripped of our right to go to school and work."

Lee and some candidates kicked black footballs at a campaign event in a symbolic banishing of the black-clad protesters.

"If everyone comes out to vote, Hong Kong can be restored and violence can be stopped," she said.

The party is contesting 181 of the 452 district council seats, a low-level neighborhood election held every four years and dominated by the pro-establishment camp. For the first time, all the seats will be contested.

Public anger against the government and police could give a



VINCENT THIAN/AP

**A Pepe the Frog stuffed toy, which has been used as a symbol of the youth-led protest in Hong Kong, is left next to burned Molotov bottles at Polytechnic University, which remained occupied by a small group of protesters Thursday.**

victory to the pro-democracy bloc that would bolster the legitimacy of the protest movement.

"We cannot give even a single vote to the pro-establishment camp," said an angry mother, who with her young son joined hundreds of people at a sit-in protest at a mall against an attack by thugs on protesters four months ago. A live video of the protest was broadcast by Apple Daily newspaper.

Protesters, who believe mainland China is increasing its control over the territory, are demanding fully democratic elections and an independent probe into alleged police brutality against demonstrators. The government rejected the demands and has warned the polls could be delayed if violence persists and transport links are disrupted.

A Hong Kong restaurant owner was deported from Singapore for organizing an illegal gathering last month to discuss the protests, Singapore media reported. Alex Yeung, who founded the Wah Kee restaurant chain and is a staunch

pro-Beijing supporter, will also be barred from entering Singapore without prior approval.

In a video posted on YouTube from Singapore's Changi Airport, Yeung said he has been warned to refrain from any criminal conduct. He didn't say where he was heading but urged Hong Kong residents to cast their vote on Sunday to "reject violence and support peace."

More than 5,000 people have been arrested since the protests started in June over a now-abandoned extradition bill that would have allowed criminal suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial. The protests have since swelled into an anti-China movement as many fear a loss of freedoms guaranteed to the former British colony when it returned to Chinese control in 1997.

A 12-year-old became the youngest protester to be convicted Thursday after pleading guilty to spraying graffiti outside a police station and subway exit last month, the South China Morning Post reported. A lawyer for the

student reportedly said he was remorseful and acted on impulse. The court will sentence him on Dec. 19.

Pressure ratcheted up on Hong Kong as the U.S. Congress approved legislation late Wednesday to sanction officials who carry out human rights abuses and to require an annual review of the favorable trade status that Washington grants Hong Kong. Another bill bans export of tear gas and other nonlethal tools to Hong Kong. President Donald Trump is expected to sign the bills into law, which is sure to anger China and jeopardize trade talks between the two economic giants.

"If the U.S. continues to make the wrong moves, China will be taking strong countermeasures for sure," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said.

The Hong Kong government warned the U.S. legislation would send an "erroneous signal to the violent protesters" and hurt the interests of more than 1,000 American businesses in Asia's top financial hub.

# Netanyahu accused of corruption

Associated Press

**JERUSALEM** — Israel's attorney general on Thursday formally charged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a series of corruption cases, throwing the country's paralyzed political system into further disarray and threatening the long-time leader's grip on power.

Capping a three-year investigation, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit charged Netanyahu with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three different scandals.

According to the indictment, Netanyahu accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of champagne and cigars from billionaire friends, offered to trade favors with a newspaper publisher and used his influence to help a wealthy telecom magnate in exchange for favorable coverage on a popular news site.

The indictment does not require Netanyahu to resign but is expected to raise pressure on him to step down.

Mandelblit was set to issue a statement later Thursday, as was Netanyahu, who has called the allegations part of a witch hunt, lashing out against the media, police, prosecutors and the justice system.

The most serious charges were connected to so-called "Case 4000," in which Netanyahu is accused of passing regulations that gave his friend, telecom magnate Shaul Elovitch, benefits worth more than \$250 million to his company, Bezeq. In return, Bezeq's news site, Walla, published favorable articles about Netanyahu and his family.

The relationship, it said, was "based on a mutual understanding that each of them had significant interests that the other side had the ability to advance."

Netanyahu was also accused of concealing the relationship by providing "partial and misleading information" about his connections with Elovitch.

# ISIS claims responsibility for troop massacre; gaining ground in Mali

The Washington Post

**DAKAR, Senegal** — Islamic State has claimed responsibility for an attack that killed 30 soldiers this week in the West African nation of Mali, where extremists are gaining ground in their bloody pursuit to seize territory.

In a statement late Wednesday, the group's West Africa arm said it wounded another 30 soldiers.

U.S. officials say the Sahel region, which lies south of the Sahara Desert, threatens to become a safe haven for terrorists to plot and launch attacks worldwide. Mali, which is twice the size of Texas, is a particularly troubling

hot spot.

"The rapidly spreading instability in the Sahel threatens U.S. national security and undermines our diplomatic goals," Whitney Baird, deputy assistant secretary of state for West Africa and security affairs, said at a congressional hearing earlier this month.

"It enables the spread of terrorism, stifles economic growth and thwarts democratic institutions," she said.

More than 100 soldiers have died in Mali since October in near-weekly clashes as the resource-strapped country tries to shake off a scourge that took root

after the Libyan government collapsed in 2011.

Mercenaries once employed by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi streamed back to their native Mali with automatic weapons, triggering a chain reaction of violence that regional security forces and international partners, including France, have since struggled to quash.

On Wednesday evening, the Malian army's Twitter account posted photos of the country's red, yellow and green flag draped over 30 wooden coffins.

"Emotions were high," the tweet said.



MALI ARMY/AP

**Thirty Malian soldiers killed in an attack by extremists near the border of Niger were honored by the Mali Defense Ministry at a funeral Wednesday in Gao, Mali.**



## WORLD

# UK's Labour vows radical change if it wins election

By JILL LAWLESS  
Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's main opposition Labour Party was launching its detailed platform for Britain's Dec. 12 election on Thursday as it tried to close an opinion poll gap with the governing Conservatives.

The left-of-center party is pledging higher public spending and a greater role for the state in housing, transport and the provision of utilities.

Labour, which has been in opposition since 2010, has shifted sharply to the left under leader Jeremy Corbyn after the centrist

"New Labour" years of former prime ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

The party says Thursday's election manifesto will include pledges to build 150,000 new homes a year for social rent and to create hundreds of thousands of "green jobs" to combat climate change by expanding renewable energy and cutting carbon emissions.

The party has also promised to partly privatize telecom provider BT and bring free broadband and internet access to every home and business in Britain.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives accuse Labour of reckless spending and outmoded

socialist ideas. But, in a major change of policy after years of public spending cuts, the Conservatives are also promising more money for infrastructure, health care and public services if they win the election.

Corbyn said his policies would be popular with the public, and compared himself to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose "New Deal" helped tackle the Great Depression.

Corbyn said Roosevelt "had to take on the rich and powerful in America to do it."

"Over the next three weeks, the most powerful people in Britain and their supporters are going



FRANK AUGSTEIN, POOL/AP

**British Prime Minister Boris Johnson poses with workers during a visit to Wilton Engineering Services on an election campaign stop in Middlesbrough, England, on Wednesday.**

to tell you that everything in this manifesto is impossible," Corbyn said before the launch.

"That it's too much for you. Because they don't want real change. Why would they? The system is working just fine for them. It's rigged in their favor."

Johnson pushed for the December election — taking place more

than two years early — in the hope of breaking Britain's political impasse over Brexit.

All 650 seats in the House of Commons are up for grabs. While Johnson's Conservatives have a lead in most opinion polls, analysts say the election is unpredictable because Brexit cuts across traditional party loyalties.

## Victims' lawyer: Prince Andrew must talk to US prosecutors

By JILL LAWLESS  
AND GREGORY KATZ  
Associated Press

LONDON — Lawyers for the victims of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein say Prince Andrew should speak to investigators immediately after the senior British royal withdrew from public duties over what he called his "ill-judged association" with the convicted pedophile.

U.S. attorney Gloria Allred said Andrew should contact American authorities "without conditions and without delay."

Andrew announced Wednesday that he was pulling out of public duties "for the foreseeable future" amid a firestorm of criticism over his friendship with Epstein. In a statement, he said he was "willing to help any appropriate law enforcement agency with their

investigations, if required."

Allred said the 59-year-old prince needed to be clearer.

"Is he insisting that he be served with a subpoena to testify, or is he willing to speak to law enforcement without being legally required to do so?" she asked on the BBC.



Prince Andrew

It is not clear if U.S. authorities are investigating Andrew for any possible wrongdoing. Many of the court papers related to the Epstein case are still sealed and unavailable to the public.

Lisa Bloom, Allred's daughter

and another lawyer for Epstein's victims, tweeted that Andrew "and his staff must cooperate with all investigations, show up for civil depositions and trials,

and produce all documents."

Businesses, charities and educational institutions affiliated with Andrew's charitable work quickly began distancing them-

selves from him this week after he gave an ill-judged interview with the BBC on Saturday night justifying his long friendship with Epstein.

## Survey: Anti-Semitic beliefs increase among Europeans

By DAVID RISING  
Associated Press

BERLIN — About 1 in 4 Europeans hold anti-Semitic beliefs, with such attitudes on the rise in eastern countries and mostly steady in the west, according to a survey released Thursday.

The poll of 14 European countries, done for the New York-based Anti-Defamation League, found anti-Semitic attitudes most prevalent in Poland, where such sentiment rose to 48% of the population from 37% in 2015, and Ukraine, where the rise was even greater — to 46% from 32% in 2016. Anti-Semitic views in Hungary were little changed but remained high, increasing from 40% to 42%.

The governments of all three countries have been criticized by

Jewish groups recently, though all deny being anti-Semitic.

For example, Ukraine's decision last year to honor a nationalist leader whose movement sided with the Nazis during World War II drew sharp remarks from Israel's ambassador, and in Hungary, the nationalist government of Viktor Orban has been widely criticized for its campaign against Jewish financier George Soros.

In Western Europe, the study found that anti-Semitic views were either stable or down, with decreases in Britain, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Austria.

Denmark saw an increase from 8% with anti-Semitic views to 10% and Belgium from 21% to 24%, while France was unchanged at 17% and Sweden had the lowest rate, at 4%.

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# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Officer to plead guilty in urinal licking case

**HI** HONOLULU — A Honolulu police officer is expected to plead guilty to depriving a homeless man of his civil rights by forcing him to lick a public urinal.

John Rabago's attorney, Megan Kau, said Tuesday he plans to plead guilty to an indictment because he wants to accept responsibility.

A former officer also charged with Rabago pleaded guilty in September to failing to report that Rabago forced the homeless man to lick the urinal. Reginald Ramones, who left the department in August, pleaded guilty to a lesser charge that he knew a fellow officer committed a civil rights violation and didn't inform authorities.

## Naked woman crashes car, killing girl, 6

**CA** SANTA CLARITA Authorities said a naked woman was behind the wheel of a car that crashed north of Los Angeles, killing a 6-year-old girl and injuring a 2-year-old.

The California Highway Patrol said the woman got into two crashes Monday morning in Stevenson Ranch, an unincorporated area near Santa Clarita.

KABC-TV said the two girls were in the back seat. Officials said Good Samaritans freed them from the wreckage as the car caught fire.

KABC-TV said the woman and the 2-year-old girl were hospitalized in stable condition.

Authorities said they believe the woman is the mother of the two girls but that hadn't been confirmed.

## 30 bison escape onto highway; 2 are killed

**MT** STEVENSVILLE

— About 30 bison escaped a western Montana ranch and ended up on the highway near Stevensville, where two suffered fatal injuries after being struck by a pickup.

Bitterroot Bison owner Troy Westre told the Hamilton, Mont., Ravalli Republic someone apparently opened a gate on the north end of the ranch property Monday evening.

The Montana Highway Patrol received a report of bison on the Eastside Highway at 8:50 p.m.

Patrol Sgt. Scott Bennett said one bison was killed by the collision with the pickup and another had a broken leg and was euthanized. The pickup was totaled. Family, friends and neighbors helped Westre round up the rest of the herd and they were back at the ranch by midnight.

## Runaway police dog bites 14-year-old boy

**KS** WICHITA — Authorities said a runaway police dog bit a teenager on the face and chest.

The Sedgewick County Sheriff's Office said in a Facebook post that the German Shepherd,



JOHN RAOUX/AP

## Virtual reality for pod people

Attendees sample one of the many virtual reality rides during the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions convention Tuesday in Orlando, Fla.

named Bocephus, went missing Monday night.

Someone found the dog, put him on a leash and walked around the neighborhood in an unsuccessful search for his owner. The person then returned home, and Bocephus was placed in the bedroom of a 14-year-old boy. The teen took the dog for a walk the next morning and was bitten while removing the leash.

The post said the boy was treated at a clinic for minor injuries.

## Police kill fox after it attacks 3 people

**NJ** EAST ORANGE — Police killed a fox that they said attacked five people in a northern New Jersey community and also tried to attack an officer. Glen Ridge police said the first attack was reported around 9:15 a.m. Nov. 15. As officers from that department and the Bloomfield Animal Control agency searched for the fox, authorities learned two other people had been bitten. The three people were treated at hospitals for bite wounds.

Officers found the fox about two hours later near the New Jersey Transit railroad tracks. Authorities said the fox was killed after it attempted to attack one of the officers.

The two other people attacked by the fox apparently were not bitten by it.

State wildlife officials will test

## THE CENSUS

# 100

The number of years of works by female cartoon artists that will be honored at a museum exhibit. The exhibit, at Ohio State University's Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, honors the contribution of female comic strip and cartoon artists. The exhibit

runs until May 2020 and includes works from early suffragette cartoonists and top comic strip page and mainstream comic book artists and art from graphic novels and anthologies.

the animal to see if it had rabies.

## Woman accused in scam to obtain visas

**MIN** MINNEAPOLIS

— A woman swindled money from four people in a scam aimed at getting visas for crime victims, according to criminal charges filed against her.

Yuridia Hernandez Linares, 36, of Eden Prairie, used a sharp object to cut the four, who then filed false police reports claiming they were injured during armed robberies, according to prosecutors.

The four told police they paid Hernandez Linares a total of \$5,000 and worked with her to file the false report in order to get a so-called U visa, which are given to victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and have been helpful to law enforcement, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported.

Hernandez Linares was charged in Hennepin County

District Court with one count of felony theft by swindle. She was jailed in Hennepin County.

## Coast Guard responds to spill after boat crash

**NC** NAGS HEAD — The

Coast Guard said it responded to a diesel spill after a tugboat collided with an old bridge on the Outer Banks.

The Coast Guard said in a news release Monday that the fuel was coming from the semi-submerged tug. It had struck the Old Bonner Bridge in Oregon Inlet. The replacement for the aging Bonner Bridge opened earlier this year.

The Coast Guard said about 3,000 gallons of fuel were onboard.

## Man uninjured after firing gun in pocket

**SD** SIOUX FALLS — Police said an intoxicated man escaped injury when he ac-

cidentally fired his gun inside his pants pocket.

The 24-year-old Sioux Falls man was arrested Monday for reckless discharge of a weapon and possession of a gun while intoxicated.

Police said officers heard a gunshot and responded to a parking ramp about 2:30 a.m.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported officers found the man had a blood alcohol content of 0.25, which is more than three times the legal limit to drive.

## 7 cars damaged in parking garage fire

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Seven cars were damaged in a parking garage fire at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas.

Clark County Fire Department officials said crews responded to the long-term parking area Terminal 3 garage Saturday.

They said the blaze was extinguished in 11 minutes and there was moderate to extensive damage to the seven vehicles.

It's unclear what started the fire, but county fire officials said a car engine overheating is a common cause of vehicle fires.

They also noted that parking garages are tight spaces, and when a vehicle catches on fire it can quickly spread.

From wire reports

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## BUSINESS/WEATHER

# Google reins in targeted political advertising

**BY RACHEL LERMAN**  
*Associated Press*

**SAN FRANCISCO**—Google is making it harder for political advertisers to target specific types of people.

The company said that as of January, advertisers will be able to target U.S. political ads based only on broad categories such as gender, age and postal code. Currently, ads can be tailored for more specific groups — for instance, using information gleaned from public voter logs, such as po-

litical affiliation.

The change will take effect in the U.K. in the next week, before the general election, and in the European Union before the end of 2019. It will apply everywhere else in early January.

Google reiterated that ads making false claims are prohibited, adding that so-called deep-fakes — realistic but false video clips — are not allowed. Neither are “demonstrably false” claims that could affect voter trust in an election.

But in a blog post announcing

the news, Google Ads vice president Scott Spencer noted that political dialogue is important and "no one can sensibly adjudicate every political claim, counterclaim and insinuation."

"So we expect that the number of political ads on which we take action will be very limited — but we will continue to do so for clear violations," he wrote.

Like in all Google ads, political advertisers can also use the broader practice of “contextual targeting,” which involves placing

ads about, say, climate change on articles about the environment.

The company is also requiring advertiser verification for a broader range of political messages. Previously, only ads mentioning candidates or officeholders for federal positions required verification. Now that will also include ads touching on state officials and candidates as well as ballot measures.

The move follows Twitter's ban on political ads, which goes into effect Friday.

In these instances, advertisers won't be able to target those ads down to a user's ZIP code or use political categories such as "conservative" or "liberal." Rather, targeting must be kept broad, based on a user's state or province, for instance.

Facebook has not made sweeping changes to any of its ad policies but thrust the issue into public discussion this fall when it confirmed it would not remove false or misleading ads by politicians.

## Amnesty International calls Facebook, Google rights abusers

**BY FRANK BAJAK**  
*Associated Press*

Amnesty International issued a scathing indictment of the world's dominant internet corporations, arguing in a new report that Google and Facebook should be forced to abandon what it calls their surveillance-based business model because it is "predicated on human rights abuse."

The global rights group said in the 60-page report published Thursday that the business model

of what it calls the "Surveillance Giants" is "inherently incompatible with the right to privacy." Google and Facebook likewise threaten a range of other rights, including freedom of expression and the right to equality and non-discrimination, the group said.

The report said the company's practice of vacuuming up personal data in order to feed voracious advertising businesses represents an unprecedented assault on privacy rights. It says the companies force people to make a

“Faustian bargain” to share their data in order to access Google and Facebook services that have grown to dominate the global public square.

Amnesty called on governments to legally guarantee people's right not to be tracked by advertisers or other third parties. It called current regulations — and the companies' own privacy-shielding measures — inadequate.

In a written five-page response published with the report, Facebook disagreed with its conclu-

sion that the company's business practices "are inconsistent with human rights principles."

Steve Satterfield, Facebook's public policy director, also disputed that the social media behemoth's business model is "surveillance-based" and noted that users sign up voluntarily for the service, which is nominally free although data collected is used to sell ads.

Google did not offer an on-the-record response to the report but disputed its findings.

[illegible]

MARKET WATCH	
Nov. 20, 2019	
Dow Jones Industrials	-112.93
	27,821.09
Nasdaq composite	-43.93
	8,526.73
Standard & Poor's 500	-11.72
	3,108.46
Russell 2000	-6.68
	1,591.61

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

## FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## FRIDAY IN EUROPE



## SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

# WEEKEND



'Frozen 2'  
Movies, Page 23

## Beautiful day for a neighbor

Tom Hanks had passed on the role of beloved children's TV host Fred Rogers, but fate intervened in the form of a friendship with director Marielle Heller. The result is 'A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood,' a film for all ages and a salve for cynical times

**Profile on Page 24**

**Review on Page 25**



## WEEKEND: GADGETS



TIMOTHY NWACHUKWU/The Washington Post

Rebecca Shelp's 14-year-old son was able to bypass Screen Time, Apple's built-in parental controls, on his iPhone 7 by resetting the device and creating a new Apple ID.

## Control failure

Workarounds for Apple app mere child's play

BY REED ALBERGOTT  
The Washington Post

**H**elen Glaze didn't think anything of it when her two sons told her they were looking for ways to get around Screen Time, Apple's built-in tool that gives parents control of their kids' phones. Then she discovered her 9- and 12-year-olds watching Minecraft videos at 2 a.m. during their annual trip to Chautauqua, N.Y., this past August.

"I was horrified and really felt betrayed," she said. And she realized she can't count on Screen Time to keep her kids off their phones. "It really doesn't work, and that's really frustrating."

Kids are outsmarting an army of engineers from Cupertino, Calif., Apple's headquarters in Silicon Valley. And Apple, which introduced Screen Time a year ago in response to pressure to address phone overuse by kids, has been slow to make fixes to its software that would close these loopholes causing some parents to raise questions about Apple's commitment to safeguarding kids from harmful content and smartphone addiction.

When Screen Time blocks an app from working, it becomes grayed out, and clicking on it does nothing unless parents approve a request for more time. At least it's supposed to work that way.

Everywhere from Reddit to YouTube, kids are sharing tips and tricks that allow them to circumvent Screen Time. They download special software that can exploit Apple security flaws, disabling Screen Time or cracking their parents' passwords. They search for bugs that make

it easy to keep using their phones, unbeknown to parents, like changing the time to trick the system, or using iMessage to watch YouTube videos.

"These are not rocket science, backdoor, dark web sort of hacks," says Chris McKenna, founder of the internet safety group Protect Young Eyes. "It blows me away that Apple hasn't thought through the fact that a persistent middle school boy or girl can bang around and find them."

He recently posted a list of loopholes, which he informed Apple of when Screen Time was first launched, but he has been compiling in an effort to warn parents and help them close them when possible.

Apple spokeswoman Michele Wyman, in an emailed statement, said the company is "committed to providing our users with powerful tools to manage their iOS devices and are always working to make them even better." Wyman did not comment on specific bugs and workarounds in Screen Time or the speed with which Apple addresses them.

The problem has bedeviled parents who have struggled to strike a balance between allowing smartphone access for schoolwork and basic social interaction and protecting their kids from the pitfalls of the mobile world.

Companies with wildly popular and profitable consumer products don't usually offer tools to help people use them less. But in early 2018, a pair of major shareholders urged Apple's board of directors to do something about youth screen addiction, arguing that addressing the issue would be good for Apple's bottom line in the long run.

Nine months later, Apple launched Screen Time as part of iOS 12. It gave parents the ability to lock down their kids' iPhones and iPads, limiting the amount of time kids could spend using the device overall as well as individual apps. Google offers a suite of similar "Digital Wellbeing" tools, and Amazon has a kids-only subscription service called FreeTime that comes pre-installed on its kids edition tablets.

Almost immediately, kids started finding ways to get around the controls, the same way they might look for a way to sneak out of the house while their parents are sleeping.

And parents started reporting their kids were circumventing the newly added Screen Time restrictions. A widely publicized Reddit post, "My kid managed to pass Screen time limit," accumulated more than 400 comments. On that post, parents reported their kids deleting and reinstalling apps and changing the clock to avoid time restrictions, and using the iMessage app to watch prohibited YouTube videos. And on Apple's own discussion board, there were titles such as "Child 'hacked' screen time limits on iOS12. Will Apple fix?"

But more than six months later, some parents were still reporting their kids using the same bug.

"I understand that there are ways, such as enforcing consequences, to manage my children's usage without software help," one Apple website commenter wrote. "However I am not seeking parenting advice, but reporting a limitation of the software which claims to perform a function that it does not."

## GADGET WATCH

## The alarm clock gets an upgrade

BY GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

**B**edside clock radios are critical for time displays and alarms to get you going in the morning. These days they are also needed for so much more, and the new AC powered iHome iBTW281 dual alarm clock speaker system does it all; it even cleaned up my nightstand mess of cables.

Along with an endless number of up-to-date features incorporating today's technology, the critical features of time and dual alarms are there. The time, date and alarm settings are on a front-facing display with adjustable brightness levels. For snoozers, the snooze duration can be adjusted.

A quick start guide runs you through the basic setup, which includes a switch inside the backup battery compartment to automatically adjust for daylight savings time. A coin battery is also included to keep the time in the event of a loss of power.

The fun features are pairing your device with Bluetooth, enabling the sound system to play whatever tunes you choose through the built-in speaker and using your smartphone's playlist as your wake-up alarm source.

Once paired, you'll also have a speakerphone with echo noise cancellation. The voice control allows access to Siri and Google Assistant.

I have a newer smartphone with Qi wireless charging, and charging couldn't be easier. Just lay any compatible wireless charging phone on top where wireless fast charging is built-in, and charging starts, even with a case on.

If you don't have a wireless charging smartphone (you need to get one; it makes life easy), there's a USB charging port on the back to connect your device.

All this adds up to cleaning up a nightstand mess of cables.

Before using this iHome device, my nightstand held an older standard clock radio with an AC power cord, a Qi charging pad with an AC power cord and an

AC power/cord for USB charging cords, all plugged into a power strip. Now, with the iHome iBTW281 alarm clock, I have one AC power cord and I connect a USB cable to the backside port to charge my iPad.

Both sides of the iBTW281 have color-changing ambient lights with a choice of presets, including a night mode. The ambient light display also has an off option. If you're playing music, one of the choices will have the lights play and pulse to the beat of your music. They are purely cosmetic but will give a room a nice look with the vibrant color lights.

Online: ihomeaudio.com; \$79.95

V-Moda has launched M-200, the award-winning company's first-ever reference studio headphone, which they refer to as the world's finest high-fidelity audio device.

The over-the-head studio headphones are designed to produce a clean, refined and spacious sound with transparent clarity, resulting in the perfect sound for producers, musicians and other sound professionals.

They feature a combination of meticulous Japanese engineering and classic V-MODA shapes and materials. Inside the headphones are 50 mm drivers with neodymium magnets and CCAW voice coils, which reproduce a wide range of frequencies up to 40 kHz.

As with every pair of V-Moda headphones I've tried over the years, comfort and design are as good as it gets. These have larger, flatter ear-cup housings compared to the Crossfade series. The closed-back M-200 features extra internal amplifying room for spacious sound with superior noise isolation.

The design includes a durable, adjustable and flexible headband, with even-weight distribution to wear in silent comfort. The exterior is made with premium, sweat-resistant PU leather and detachable magnetic memory foam cushions.

The M-200 is available for pre-order for \$350, with delivery expected in late November

Online: V-Moda.com



V-Moda/TNS  
The M-200 headphones



iHome/TNS

The iHome iBTW281 dual alarm clock speaker system

ON THE COVER: Tom Hanks plays TV icon Fred Rogers in "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."

Sony Pictures Entertainment



## WEEKEND: MOVIES



DISNEY/AP

"Frozen 2" is a sequel to the animated hit about two sisters (Idina Menzel and Kristen Bell), one of whom has magical powers.

# Lukewarm praise for 'Frozen II'

## Sequel doesn't make waves, but it keeps the franchise on track

By KATIE WALSH  
Tribune News Service

Disney's 2013 animated "Frozen," inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," wasn't just a hit. It was a cultural tidal wave, a ubiquitous phenomenon thanks to Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez's soaring songs, particularly the inescapable, Oscar-winning "Let It Go," belted by Broadway powerhouse Idina Menzel. Six years later, the Elsa Halloween costumes have yet to grow cold. So when it comes to a sequel, the only mandate is: "Don't muck it up."

The good news is they haven't. The bad news? That's about it. "Frozen II" doesn't represent some giant leap forward for the "Frozen" universe, it merely keeps the franchise on track. For many, that'll be fine: more adventures of Elsa (Menzel),

Anna (Kristen Bell), Olaf (Josh Gad) and Kristoff (Jonathan Groff). But the movie has all the staying power of a snowflake: It evaporates almost on contact.

Once again helmed by Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, "Frozen II" merely drifts pleasantly in and out of our consciousness, a diverting way to spend an hour and 43 minutes with some great tunes and lovely snowy landscapes to ogle. It will of course be seared into the brains of parents and kids after their millionth viewing. And it's enjoyable and funny enough to be tolerated that many times, which seems to be what it's designed for.

What made "Frozen" rather revolutionary was its sisterhood story that resonated with so many people who were sick of seeing the same old princess-saved-by-a-prince tale. A princess saved by a princess? Now there's an idea. The snowy

story about sisters powered by power ballads is infectious, and Disney hasn't messed too much with the formula.

Elsa is now queen of Arendelle, playing charades with her sister, Kristoff and Olaf, enjoying a bit of domestic bliss. Like almost every animated hero, Disney and otherwise, there's a bit of singing about how great things are where they are right now, which is (of course) foiled by an existential threat. Elsa's plagued by a mysterious voice from the forest, coupled with some inclement weather. Recalling a folk song her mother (Evan Rachel Wood) used to sing about memories in an ancient river, she decides to dive into her ancestral history to discover the source of the voice, save Arendelle and free the forest from a persistent fog. She does so with her sister, her sister's boyfriend, their snowman and a reindeer in tow. Isolationist

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"Frozen II," in general, might not capture hearts the way the groundbreaking original did in 2013. It turns out to be a fairly typical sequel: overly busy and meandering, but sure to please all the young Elsas in the audience.

—Rafer Guzman  
Newsday

"Lost in the Woods," sung by the effortlessly lovable Jonathan Groff, is a highlight of the film. The rest, you ask? Well, it's got quality, and it's got quantity. (HOW many animators are listed in those closing credits?) It just doesn't have the exciting, lightning-in-a-bottle feel that the wonderful original had.

— Jocelyn Noveck  
Associated Press

As in the original, the animation is luminescent, perhaps even more so with the autumnal colors of Arendelle and the icy beauty of the north when they visit. The story is smart and funny and wholly entertaining. The music is stellar, too.

— Laura DeMarco  
The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)

Elsa insists she has to make the journey alone, but like all the emotionally heavy, therapized Disney heroines of late, she learns she can't do it all alone and accepts Anna's help.

The songs by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez are bangers, naturally, and parents might be glad to discover that the catchiest song on the soundtrack isn't an Elsa belter, but a pitch-perfect '80s power ballad sung by Kristoff. If only the rest of the film were more memorable. It's not a disappointment by any means. It's what you expect from the characters and world, and it gets the job done. But the most enthusiasm one can muster for "Frozen II" is it's perfectly adequate, unlikely to create a seismic cultural shift like its predecessor.

"Frozen II" is rated PG for action/peril and some thematic elements. Running time: 103 minutes.

## 'Frozen II' aiming to build on the power of the original

By JONATHAN LANDRUM JR.  
Associated Press

When Idina Menzel first started performing "Let It Go" live in concerts, she thought the lyrics and soaring vocals would empower all those young girls in the audience dressed up as Elsa.

Instead, Menzel said she often walked away from those performances feeling just as inspired.

"I feel an extreme sense of pride about it," said Menzel, the Tony Award-winning performer who voices Elsa, a fiercely independent queen with the magical ability to manipulate ice and snow. The song especially resonated with her because at the time she was juggling several shows on Broadway and going through a divorce while "trying to put one foot in front of the other."

"But you see a little girl in a blue dress in the second row. That's when you realize the song and movie represents them. It's giving them permission to take ownership of who they are, and everything that makes them unique and different. But it's a reciprocity. It's coming back to me exponentially because I need to hear it too."

Menzel believes "Frozen II" has the capacity to empower young girls, boys and others of all ages in the same way. The new film comes six years after the original broke box office records for an animated film, amassing \$1.2 billion in worldwide ticket sales. It was bolstered by "Let It Go," which won a Grammy and two Oscars.

Menzel is unsure if the sequel can generate the same



Menzel



Bell

astronomical numbers as the original. But she is hopeful the story and music can resonate with viewers and further the themes of the original, including showing that female characters don't necessarily need their male counterpart to rescue them from distress.

"I think it'll move people," she said. "I think the film is powerful. I don't know what the success of the music will be outside the film. But I know how I felt when I heard (the songs). I know how much I loved recording them and getting inside of them. I think people will learn from Elsa who is always overcoming her fear to take the next step and risk."

In "Frozen II," Elsa finally embraces her powers, but she finds herself haunted by an unsettling voice from afar that no one else can hear. She ends up going on a dangerous journey to seek answers with her sister Anna, played by Kristen Bell.

Also joining them are Anna's boyfriend Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), his reindeer friend Sven and the bubbly snowman Olaf, voiced by Josh Gad.

Co-director Chris Buck said the sequel has moments of being "fun and humorous," but the story also delves deep



Groff



Gad

into Elsa and Anna's emotions. He said the main characters are trying to find meaning. The film expands on challenges facing Elsa's kingdom of Arendelle, with Sterling K. Brown and Evan Rachel Wood joining the cast.

"The first film is more like Act 1 of a musical where you're setting up the characters' wants and who they are," Buck said. "In this one, we can do Act 2. Usually, those songs go deeper and they're more emotional. You find out more. The struggles are harder. We had this sort of template. That helped us shape it."

Several deadlines were "blown past" while creating the storyline that had at least 50 versions of re-writes, the directors said.

Bell applauded the creative team for taking their time.

"They didn't just try to come up with the follow-up for whatever monetary or marketing sake," the actress said. "You can see a follow-up from anything and you know in your soul, in your gut whether or not you connect to it. Like 'Oh those are the same characters I loved but didn't connect to them.' They wanted to find something that people would connect to."

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

# Miracle worker

BY JAKE COYLE  
Associated Press

**T**om Hanks has never played a superhero. But when the actor recently donned a very simple cardigan sweater, and the slacks to go with it, he felt like one.

"I felt like Batman. It felt like I was wearing the cape and the cowl of the Dark Knight detective," Hanks says. "There's only one person you can be when you put those things on, and that's Fred Rogers."

Since it was first announced, Hanks' casting as the beloved children's television host in "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" has had the feeling of kismet. Here was an actor nearly synonymous with affability, with "niceness," playing one of the friendliest faces to ever flicker across a TV screen. Hanks might as well have been answering a Bat-Signal in the sky.

But as inevitable as Hanks playing Mr. Rogers may have seemed, it never would have happened without Marielle Heller, the filmmaker of the literary forger drama "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" and the '70s coming-of-age tale "The Diary of a Teenage Girl." The film's script, by Noah Harpster and Micah Fitzerman-Blue, had been floating around for years before Heller got attached. Hanks had already passed on it, more than once.

"I didn't pass on you," Hanks said in an interview alongside Heller. "I just passed on a thing."

It would probably please Mister Rogers that the first big-screen fiction film about him was based, from the start, on a newfound friendship. Hanks and Heller met at a backyard birthday party for Hanks' son Colin. Hanks had just read a New York Times article about female filmmakers and mentioned it to Heller after learning she was a director.

"And she said, 'I'm in it,'" recalls Hanks. "And I said, 'Well, of course you are and I have to remove my shoe from my mouth.'"

Hanks, newly resolved to work more with female directors, promised to watch "Diary of a Teenage Girl."

"I thought, 'Sure, Tom

Tom Hanks had already passed on role of Mister Rogers. When he met Marielle Heller, he changed his mind

Hanks, I'm sure you'll run right out and watch my movie,'" says Heller. "And you did!"

Within days, Hanks called to set up a meeting, and that led to "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."

Getting close to Rogers altered Hanks and Heller. The production had the blessing of Joanne Rogers, Fred's widow, and much of it was shot on location in Pittsburgh. Hanks wore Rogers' old ties. He swam the same laps in a local pool. They collectively tried to live the kindness preached by Rogers, an ordained Presbyterian minister. The movie impresses the point that Rogers wasn't a saint; he had to work at being good.



Heller

"At one point early on, Tom said to me, 'I get the feeling none of us are going to be the same after making this movie,'" Heller says.

That meant trying to slow down not just the tempo of the scenes but the entire workings of a movie set. Heller's son, 2 years old when they started, was often on set, and occasionally in the director's chair. Heller shortened the day-to-day schedule so that everyone, including herself, could be home by their children's bedtime on most nights.

"For me, as a mom of a little kid, that's the difference between being able to keep making movies or not being able to keep making movies," says Heller. "How do we think about our humanity while making movies? Would Fred Rogers have wanted us to make a movie about him where we all abandoned our kids in order to make the movie? I don't think so."

Both were relatively new disciples of Rogers'. As a kid, the 40-year-old Marin County, Calif.-raised Heller dismissed him as too schmaltzy. But now a parent, she found herself gravitating toward Mr. Rogers as a guide to explaining the world to her son. Hanks, 63, hadn't raised his four now-grown children watching "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood," so the dozens of hours he spent watching it to prepare for the role was eye-opening.

"I almost feel silly talking about it," says Hanks. "This movie has actually made me think a lot about myself as a man and a father. When I saw Mari, I said, 'Hey, thanks for putting me in this movie, because you kind of changed my life, boss.'"

The movie called on Hanks to learn how to earnestly — not out of habit — ask questions like "How are you?"

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"A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" is based on the true story of the friendship between Fred Rogers (Tom Hanks) and journalist Tom Junod (Matthew Rhys, not pictured).

SONY-TRISTAR PICTURES/AP

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



Tom Hanks stars in "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."

SONY-TRISTAR PICTURES/AP

## 'A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood'

# Tom Hanks anchors a lovely Mister Rogers tale for adults

By LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

Director Marielle Heller frames "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" as if it were an episode of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," with miniature sets of cars and bridges to illustrate New York and Pittsburgh. Mr. Rogers, played with clear-eyed purpose by Tom Hanks, introduces the audience to the film's protagonist, journalist Lloyd Vogel (Matthew Rhys), using his "picture window" in that all-too-familiar living room where he's just changed into his sneakers and sweater. It's even rated PG.

But "A Beautiful Day" is not really a children's story at all. It's a story about a man who suffers from the doubly impossible combination of being an adult and an investigative journalist. In other words, he's the person least likely to be charmed by the straightforward sincerity of someone like Fred Rogers.

The film is loosely based on Tom Junod's article "Can You Say...Hero?", which appeared in Esquire magazine in November of 1998. Junod has said that spending time with the then-70-year-old changed him. Cynical at first, the two formed a friendship — Junod's first ever with a subject — that lasted until Rogers died in 2003.

The similarities stop there and the film veers off in its own direction, adding drama and elements that are not part of Junod's life at all (like getting into a fistfight with his father at his sister's wedding, neither of which happened). But as Junod writes in *The Atlantic* this month, the film "seems like a culmination of the gifts that Fred Rogers gave me and all of us, gifts that fit the definition of grace because they feel, at least in my case, undeserved."

Essentially, Fred Rogers' lessons can apply to adults too. And "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" spins its magic to show (not just tell) us how, no matter if it's mostly a fiction from the minds of screenwriters Micah Fitzerman-Blue and Noah Harpster.

The film introduces Lloyd at a particularly unstable moment. He's got a newborn son with his wife, Andrea (an understated and excellent Susan Kelechi Watson), and his long-estranged father (Chris Cooper) has suddenly started trying to come back into his life. It's under these high-pressure circumstances that his editor (Christine Lahti) assigns him to write a "small piece" about Fred Rogers for the magazine's "heroes issue." Lloyd scoffs at what he considers a demeaning assignment. He's there to be an investigative journalist and the host of a cheesy children's show is, he thinks, below him. Andrea even asks her husband, knowing what kind of writer he is, to please not ruin her childhood.

He remains skeptical even upon meeting Fred and goes back to his editor to ask for more time, saying that he "just doesn't think he's for real." Sure, part of you is probably thinking Lloyd a monster. But consider Lloyd's point of view too: Fred uses puppets during his interview and deflects quite a bit on the more pressing questions, often diverting and asking about his interviewer instead of answering.

And yet, his goodness starts to transcend all of that. Heller does a marvelous job illustrating the effect Fred has on those around him. Even the production staff whom he infuriates with his tendency to veer off schedule by spending too long with visitors, falls in line when he starts to work his singular magic in front of the camera. They know they're making something special.

Hanks is such an obvious choice to play someone as beloved as Fred Rogers that his performance is something that could be in danger of being taken for granted or overlooked. He just makes it all look so easy — the almost uncomfortably slow way that he speaks. But it's a testament to Hanks that you can't "see" the work. But much like Fred Rogers, you don't have to understand it to be moved.

"A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" is rated PG for some strong thematic material, a brief fight and some mild language. Running time: 108 minutes.

## FROM PAGE 24

Heller would tell Hanks to thank his costar Matthew Rhys, "but this time mean it."

"I'm sort of like the authenticity police," says Heller. "I'm there to make sure what we're capturing is true. So much of my job is to be the one on set going, 'Did I feel that? Did it feel true?'"

In Hanks' Mister Rogers, Heller wasn't interested in an impression. A wig and some eyebrows were OK, but that was it. And, of course, the cardigan. The first time Hanks stepped onto set at WQED's Fred Rogers Studio in character, sweater-to-sneakers, Heller says, "the room gasped."

"It was like coming in as Elvis into Graceland," says Hanks, a little

sheepishly. "I had no sense of self. I really felt like I was having an out-of-body experience of watching this other guy be Fred Rogers."

Having recently explained death to her now 5-year-old son, Heller was concerned he'd be confused. She didn't have to worry.

"He said, 'Mom, I know that's Tom Hanks,'" says Heller, laughing. Hanks smiles. "Hip kid, man."



STX FILMS/AP

An embattled NYPD detective (Chadwick Boseman) is thrust into a citywide manhunt for a pair of cop killers after uncovering a massive conspiracy in "21 Bridges."

## Predictability mars police manhunt flick '21 Bridges'

By MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN  
The Washington Post

The movie "21 Bridges" opens with a bang. Not literally — it's just a close-up of a 13-year-old boy's tear-streaked face, as he listens to the off-camera sermon delivered at his father's funeral. We learn that Dad, a New York City cop, has been killed in the line of duty, but not before he "punished" three of the four criminals he was pursuing.

It's an artful — and telling — moment, not only for the image's simplicity, emotional power and good casting. Playing Andre, the young actor, Christian Ilaqui, really looks like he could grow up to be Chadwick Boseman, who later portrays NYPD detective Andre "Dre" Davis as a grown man. It also sets the stage for the rest of the overly schematic but reasonably watchable film, with the erroneous assumption that it's the role of the police to not just enforce the law but to mete out harsh justice for those who break it.

Dre, of course, who is the film's hero, doesn't really believe that, but people think he does. The second scene in the film shows him in front of an Internal Affairs panel that is investigating his propensity for discharging his firearm on the job. And when eight cops and a civilian are killed in the robbery of a wine store with a freezer full of 300 kilos of cocaine — only 50 of which are actually taken — Dre's presumptive trigger-happiness is what gets him assigned to the case by the captain of the precinct whose officers were gunned down (J.K. Simmons).

Dre, it is assumed, will find the perps and, you know, save us all the headache and heartache of endless appeals and plea bargains with a strategic bullet or two. He is assisted in the hunt by a DEA agent (Sienna Miller, with whom Boseman has an unfortunate lack of chemistry).

Ah, but chemistry — or, for that matter, character development — is not what "21 Bridges" is about. It is a game of hide-and-seek, as Dre quickly convinces the police brass and the FBI, who convince the mayor, to shut down Manhattan: every bridge, tunnel, train track and river into and out of the city, for a window of a few short hours while he uses his almost superhuman deductive skills to tighten the noose around the perps. (Taylor Kitsch plays the cop killer, and Stephan James is his more reluctant — and less bloodthirsty — partner.)

It's a pretty artificial, not to mention absurd, scenario, as Dre goes after his quarry with speed and success that is surprising even for someone with his Sherlock Holmes-like forensic powers. Soon enough, it becomes apparent to Dre — and to us — that there is a setup going on, as he observes very early in the film.

It isn't hard to figure out who's behind it, if you've seen a million of these things.

And there have been a lot of them. "21 Bridges" will win no prizes for originality or twists. But it's made well enough. Brothers Joe and Anthony Russo ("Avengers: Endgame") are the producers, and Irish director Brian Kirk ("Games of Thrones") knows how to keep an old jalopy like this well-oiled to get us across the finish line.

In other words, "21 Bridges" gets the job done. So does Boseman, who is satisfying to watch, even when he has little to do except the right thing. Dre isn't tarnished or tainted in any way. He's not guilt-ridden, seeking redemption or complicated. "21 Bridges" might be a teeny bit more interesting if he were.

"21 Bridges" is rated R for violence and coarse language throughout. Running time: 99 minutes.



## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

# Blazing a postapocalyptic trail

## Death Stranding is the Oregon Trail of today's gaming

By GIESON CACHO  
The Mercury News

Look up the word "enigma" in the dictionary and you'll find a picture of Death Stranding. Since it was revealed in 2016, the game raised more questions than answers. The project seemed like an amalgamation of random images with gameplay that was equally as mysterious.

If you strip away creator Hideo Kojima's convoluted and confusing narrative, Death Stranding at its core is a reimagining of Oregon Trail. The concepts behind both titles are the same. Players have to go across the country with logistic constraints of weight and terrain.



Unlike the classic PC game, Death Stranding offers a granular approach to the adventure. Kojima Productions splits the process into four parts. The first teaches players the mechanics. As protagonist Sam Bridges, played by Norman Reedus, players have to traverse a postapocalyptic America that has turned into a desolate wilderness.

A phenomena called Death Stranding killed billions as the line between the dead and living disappeared. Invisible monsters called BTs roam the land and people live in bunkers, afraid to travel. Sam accepts a mission to connect communities to the Chiral Network, a super internet that lets users across the nation share information and fabricate equipment. It's a way for his organization, Bridges, to rebuild what it calls the United Cities of America.

Players will have to navigate the badlands and figure out how to reach faraway waystations, distribution centers and outposts. Initially that means using ladders to cross streams and ropes to descend safely from cliffsides. They must do this while carrying vital cargo that will keep these communities going. Sam will also have to deal with BTs, which forces him to stealthily venture through dangerous areas, and insane humans called MULEs, who hoard cargo. (This is a Kojima game so it asks players to accept a lot.)

This quarter of the game introduces players to the basics and advances them to the Midwest, where the bulk of Death Stranding takes place. The team throws more tools at players as they try to reconnect different parts of America. At first, it's tough sledding because the players will meander through their destinations blind. They'll have to fend off violent MULEs and they'll have to battle BTs using Sam's blood, which has unique properties to banish the creatures.

Like Oregon Trail, Death Stranding is a game about pioneering. Players blaze trails through lonely landscapes. They have to wach out for a number of dangers



PHOTOS BY SONY INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT/TNS

Sam (Norman Reedus) and Deadman (Guillermo Del Toro) look at BB, an organism that lets humans see invisible monsters called BTs.

and find the optimal path to their destination. What's notable, though, is that players don't go it alone. As they travel, they see the tracks of other players that came before them. In addition, gamers can share infrastructure they built and vehicles they fabricated. It's a way of making the journey easier for each other.

It's an asynchronous form of multiplayer and comparable to what Dark Souls did with the idea of leaving notes and hints through a dungeon. Death Stranding does this with a complex open world. Part of the joy in the campaign is finding a new route and nudging others to take it. Players will get feedback in the form of "likes" from fellow adventurers who appreciate a helpful structure such as a bridge, zip line or generator.

This second part also gives players the option to work on a road that winds its way through different communities. It requires a lot of resources, but players are supposed to pool the materials together to make travel easier. As that happens, old routes become obsolete and more people use the roads to haul cargo from one end of the map to another.

Death Stranding becomes a game about efficiently moving packages like a postapocalyptic UPS man. Along the way, Sam will gain new abilities and equipment that makes venturing into the unknown easier.

The last effective part of the Death Stranding journey has Sam trudging through the mountains. This is where roads won't help players and they'll have to deal with snowy and harsh conditions. This section forces players to build their own infrastructure through the peaks and ridges. It tests players' mastery of managing weight, energy consumption and route building. It's also the most enjoyable part of the campaign, when players feel like pioneers.

Those expecting this to be like Metal Gear Solid will be disappointed. Death Stranding isn't that type of game. Combat



Sam runs away from MULEs, people who have gone insane over packages. They attack porters carrying items across the United States.

is often incidental and players are encouraged to defeat terrorists and MULEs non-lethally. Players will encounter gunfights at isolated chapters and the occasional boss fight, but at its heart, the game is about adventuring in its purest form. The conflict is about man against nature rather than an army of commandos or a multinational corporation.

Woven through this Oregon Trail-style adventure is a complex narrative and the last quarter of Death Stranding focuses on this. Here is when Kojima tries to tie up the unruly plot threads that emerge throughout the campaign. Players will encounter subterfuge and conspiracy theories and they'll have to sift for truth through the lies and misdirection. Although much of it is a mess, his team

manages to answer nearly all the lingering questions, though the ending will test players' patience.

The finale drags on as Kojima explains every minor detail of his world. Essentially, Death Stranding is Kojima unfettered, without an editor or someone to tell him no. The result of this is a project that's bizarre, hokey and at times brilliant. Fans can gripe about the obtuseness of the narrative, but players can't say that this is generic. It's an adventure full of original ideas that forges a path of its own, but that takes players, for better or worse, through the eccentric imagination of one of video game's true auteurs.

Platform: PlayStation 4

Online: [kojimaproductions.jp/en/death\\_stranding.html](http://kojimaproductions.jp/en/death_stranding.html)



More game reviews at [stripes.com/games](http://stripes.com/games)

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

## Europe



PHOTOS BY MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

Wet specimens of living things, also known as animals floating in bottles, are on display at Berlin's natural history museum.

# Jarring display

## Array of animal specimens awaits at Berlin museum

By MARTIN EGNASH  
Stars and Stripes

Germany's hip, modern capital is as well known for its all-night parties as it is for historical symbols like the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin Wall and Checkpoint Charlie. But unbeknownst to many, the city is also home to one of the greatest natural history museums in the world, the Museum fuer Naturkunde.

If you're like me, you'll end up spending an embarrassingly long time in this museum, discovering collections that include a gallery of animals preserved in jars and an exhibit featuring the largest mounted dinosaur skeleton in the world.

The dinosaurs are the highlight of the museum, if you ask me. Three enormous dinosaur skeletons stand tall in their exhibit area in the heart of the sprawling museum complex. In the center of the trio is the skeleton of a 45-foot-tall Giraffatitan, once thought to be a second species of the Brachiosaurus genus.

The Giraffatitan is massive on every dimension. Even its forelegs look bigger than my first car. The museum made a replica of the dinosaur's skull and put it at ground level so you can see what it looks like, because you can't see the details so high up.

The museum is also home to one of the most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeletons in the world and a "missing link" fossil that looks like a ferocious chicken.

Although kids tend to love dinosaurs, the museum has posted a disclaimer warning that "realistic animated films with hunting



The museum's Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton is one of the most complete in the world.

scenes among dinosaurs ... which might terrify children" are screened in the exhibit area.

After you finish ogling the dinosaurs, head to the hall of mineral specimens, which includes fancy crystals and gnarly colored rocks. The coolest is probably the moon rock brought back from the last manned trip there.

Among the preserved animals on display in another room is Germany's much-loved Knut the polar bear, who was reared by zookeepers at Berlin's zoo after his mother abandoned him. Knut died in 2011 at the age of 4 to the sorrow of fans around the world.

Another room, filled with jars of dead animals, is as fascinating as it is gross. Look for the snake that choked on a lizard among the animals floating in jars. It's sick.

Dozens of meteorites and models of planets and stars feature in several exhibits about space, while man's impact on the environment is the focus of another exhibit. The museum's displays about climate change, pollution and modern farming are a lot less fun than the dinosaur ones, but you should probably see them anyway.

egnash.martin@stripes.com  
Twitter: @Marty\_Stripes



A snake that choked on a lizard is among the museum's array of jarred specimens.

## ON THE QT

### DIRECTIONS

Address: Invalidenstrasse 43, 10115 Berlin; There is a tram stop right by the museum. Get off at the Museum fuer Naturkunde stop.

### TIMES

9:30 am to 6 p.m., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends, closed on Mondays

### COSTS

Adult entry is 8 euros (\$8.81), students and children ages six to 15 are 5 euros. Ages five and under get in free.

### FOOD

The museum's cafe offers light lunch items such as soups and sandwiches, as well as sweet baked goods and hot and cold drinks.

### INFORMATION

Online: [museumfuernaturkunde.berlin/en](http://museumfuernaturkunde.berlin/en)

— Martin Egnash



From top: The museum houses Germany's much-loved Knut the polar bear, who was reared by zookeepers at the Berlin Zoo. Knut was preserved after he died at the age of 4 in 2011.

A moon rock, thought to be about 3.75 billion years old, is one of many mineral specimens displayed. Among the other skeletons is a Giraffatitan, one of the largest dinosaurs to walk the earth.

# WEEKEND IS: TRAVEL

# Europe

# Portugal's Tomar a break from tourist tumult

With a rich culture, friendly people, affordable prices and a salty setting on the edge of Europe, Portugal understandably makes a rewarding destination for travelers. Bustling Lisbon and the sunny Algarve coast are well known to tourists (for good reason), but quieter places also offer tantalizing tastes of Portuguese flavor.

About 90 miles northeast of Lisbon, just east of the pilgrimage site of Fatima, is lushly green Tomar — a quaint town of about 20,000 residents tucked under a historic fortress. It's a place with lots of local ambience, yet remarkably untouristed — and well worth a stop.

While there was a settlement here in Roman times, Tomar's importance started in the 12th century with the construction of a hill-topping castle, the Convento de Cristo. Guadim Pais, a Grand Master of the Knights Templar religious order, put Tomar on the map by building the castle with Middle Eastern architectural techniques picked up during Crusades to the Holy Land.

To get the lay of the land, I strolled Tomar's riverside. The tiny Nabão River, running north-south through the middle of town, is all Tomar's — it starts nearby and flows just a few miles before emptying into the Tagus River outside of town. Mid-river, a peaceful island with a pleasant park and a rebuilt medieval waterwheel offers what must have been impressive technology in its day. At the old bridge, Ponte Velha, I headed right through the old town to the main square, Praça da República. The town's easy-to-navigate grid is a reminder that Tomar was a garrison town built to defend the castle.

Praça da República is a tempting spot to sit down and nurse a drink at a cafe, enjoying the relaxed tempo of local life.

Children on bikes test their training wheels, pigeons strut as if they own the place, old-timers shake their heads at today's fashions, and tuk-tuk drivers hustle business (negotiating short town tours on motorized rickshaws). The neighborhood offers plenty of inviting spots to grab a bite or a drink, such as the classic Cafe Paraiso, a time-warped eatery retaining the humble vibe of mid-century days.

Since Tomar is inland, pork and beef are staples on any menu here. All over town I noticed loaves of bread stacked into a very tall "crown," decorated with flowers. Women carry these on their heads in a festival every four years, incorporating pagan and harvest rituals into the Catholic celebration during the Festa dos Tabuleiros (Festival of the Trays) in late June or early July. Thanks to this tradition, expect fantastic bread with any meal here. Sip a glass of local Tejo wine or try a Portuguese craft beer as well.

Towering above Tomar is its castle, with an Oz-like oratory built 800 years ago. This circular chapel is where knights would go to be blessed before battle as they defended Portugal against the Moors, protected pilgrims heading for the Holy Land, or championed Portugal in the Age of Discovery. The Knights Templar was a rich organization — both as a popular Christian charity and as originator of Europe's first great banking system. Pilgrims from western Europe would deposit their money with the Templars before leaving home, were given a "check" (farther than cash to travel with), and could make



ROBERT WRIGHT/Ricksteves.com

**Tomar's Praça da República is a classic Portuguese square where you can relax at a cafe and enjoy the Old World scene.**

withdrawals along their pilgrimage as they ventured east. You could call the Templars the first multinational corporation. When pilgrims died on their journey, which was all too common, the Templars kept their estate. (When banking, always read the fine print!)

The Convento de Cristo's interior gives a glimpse of the mystical wonder of the Knights Templar. The original castle and oratory were built when such impressive architecture was new in Europe.

The oratory was designed so horses (important in the Templars' success on the battlefield) could be ridden in and blessed. Later, under Portuguese King

Manuel I, a big conventional church was added. The oratory's wall was cut open to connect the church and the oratory with a grand, triumphal arch. The church's nave is decorated in the incredibly intricate Manueline style — motifs that pay tribute to the sea trade that made Portugal rich. Ornamental shields and coats of arms are decorated with castles, crosses, lions, flags and crowns. There are even designs that duplicate ropes used on ships during Portugal's Age of Discovery.

Rick Steves ([www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com)) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at [rick@ricksteves.com](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com) and follow his blog on Facebook.

## TOP TRAVEL PICKS

### Documentary film festival in Netherlands

In a season suited to indoor pursuits, film festivals can make a welcome diversion. The world's largest festival for documentaries runs through Dec. 1 in Amsterdam.

Over its 12-day run, the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, or IDFA, screens some 300 films from around the world, the works of both established filmmakers and promising newcomers. The social themes touched on reflect the spirit of the times. This year's crop takes viewers from a juvenile detention center in Iran to a gritty nightclub in Mexico City and behind the scenes at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

Competitive sections of the festival are based on film length, as well as for best debut and student production. Awards bestowed during IDFA include film on the rights of human rights and best film as chosen by the audience. Debates, forums and workshops round out the program.

As an international festival, IDFA's official language is English, and films shown in languages other than English have subtitles. Screenings take place in cinemas throughout town.



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: [stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler](http://stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

Viewers can purchase tickets to individual screenings or get a discount pass for five films; another option is to buy a day pass for a full day of thematic programming. [idfa.nl/en](http://idfa.nl/en)

### Christmas markets open in Germany

Although the majority of Germany's biggest and best-attended Christmas markets open only during the last week of November, those who just can't wait those extra few days for their holiday fix can attend a handful of early openers. Bear in mind that many will not be open on Nov. 24, which is Totensonntag, a day for remembering loved ones who have passed.

Here are just a few that are

already up and running:

**Baden-Wuerttemberg**  
**Schwäbisch Hall-Wacker-shofen:** pre-Christmas market at the Hohenlohe Open Air Museum, Nov. 23-24 only, entry 4 euros adults, ages 15 and under free.

**Bavaria**  
**Altoetting:** Christkindmarkt, Nov. 23-Dec. 15.

**Bad Teelz:** Christkindmarkt, Nov. 22-Dec. 24.

**Garmisch-Partenkirchen:**

Nov. 23-Dec. 23.  
**Linndau:** Harbor Christmas market, Nov. 21-Dec. 15, Thursdays through Sundays only.

**Regensburg:** market at Schloss Thurn und Taxis, Nov. 22-Dec. 23, closed Nov. 24.

**North Rhine-Westphalia**  
**Aachen:** Nov. 22-Dec. 23, open daily (open 6 p.m.-9 p.m. only on Nov. 24).

**Rhineland-Palatinate**  
**Bad Kreuznach:** Nikolausmarkt by the Nikolaus Kirche and Eiermarkt, open daily Nov. 23-Dec. 22 (closed Nov. 24).

**Ludwigshafen:** Berliner Platz, open daily through Dec. 23 (closed Nov. 24).

**Worms:** Obermarkt, open daily through Dec. 23 (closed Nov. 24).

### Holiday destinations for the younger set

While authentic, centuries-old monuments might make the ideal



Warner Bros. Studio Tour London — The Making of Harry Potter

**Harry Potter fans have a holiday treat with Hogwarts in the Snow at the Warner Brothers Studio Tour London through Jan. 26.**

setting for grown-ups' holiday visions, the worlds of Harry Potter and Disney are likely to make more of an impression on younger travelers. Either of these holiday-themed outings is apt to earn their approval.

**Hogwarts in the Snow:** the Warner Brothers Studio Tour London's holiday edition allows visitors to experience the wizarding world over the festive season. The Great Hall is decked out as it was for the Yule Ball (in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"), other sets glisten with holiday touches, and the special effects used to create flames and snow are revealed. The tour is offered

through Jan. 26; tickets go for 46 pounds for adults (\$59.50) and 38 pounds for ages 5-15. Online: [wbstudioour.co.uk/hogwarts-in-the-snow](http://wbstudioour.co.uk/hogwarts-in-the-snow)

**Disneyland Paris:** the park puts on its festive best with a giant sparkling tree, a Christmas parade featuring characters from Minnie to Buzz Lightyear atop festive floats, seasonal sing-alongs, a Broadway-inspired tap dancing show, a fairy-tale waltz featuring Disney's best-loved couples and more through Jan. 5. Weekend entry costs approximately \$105 for adults and \$97 for ages 3-11; online: [tinyurl.com/soesd92](http://tinyurl.com/soesd92)



## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

## Europe



Burger Zone offers dessert options like this brownie topped with ice cream and popcorn.



Burger Zone supplements its diverse menu of burgers with several options for fries. Sweet potato fries (left) are joined by "dirty fries" topped with cheese and bacon.



Photos by Jacqueline Broome

The Signature burger, featuring an onion marmalade, cheese and homemade ketchup, is served at Burger Zone. The eatery delivers on its promises of fresh, unprocessed ingredients.

# 'Room for one more'

## Burger Zone finds space in saturated burger joint market

By GREGORY BROOME  
Stars and Stripes

Before he became famous as Spock on Star Trek, a young Leonard Nimoy worked as a taxi driver while pursuing an acting career. One night, he picked up future President John F. Kennedy in his cab. The two eventual cultural icons discussed the challenges of their respective fields.

"Lots of competition in your business, just like in mine," Nimoy recalled JFK telling him. "Just remember there's always room for one more good one."

This quote has served as a touchstone for me at many points throughout my life. And it occurred to me again recently as I bit into an enormous bacon cheeseburger.

Burger Zone, a new restaurant in Kaiserslautern between Vogelweh and Ramstein Air Base, is entering a very crowded burger-and-fry market. Relatively recent entries like Sissi and Franz, Burgerme, Lutra Burger and Burger 1657 have already moved into the area as upscale alternatives to the ubiquitous sprawl of McDonald's and Burger King locations. The options for those with base access in the Kaiserslautern Military Community are even more vast, including the reliably solid burger menu at Chili's and the eagerly anticipated Wahlburgers in the Ramstein Exchange.

Burger Zone, perhaps taking its inspiration from the wisdom of JFK, has nonetheless confidently charged into this saturated market for saturated fats. Fortunately, Burger Zone is a good one, and I'll make room for



it in my rotation of favorite local eateries.

I'm generally ambivalent and on occasion openly hostile to restaurants engaging in the farm-to-table Olympics, touting the freshness and impeccable sourcing of their ingredients and pledging their absolute disdain for microwaves and freezers. Burger Zone's website leans very aggressively into this approach, to the point that my early notes for this article included several eye-rolling emoji.

But I have to admit my actual visit to the restaurant won me over. The ingredients did taste fresher than usual, and the various sauces I tried delivered a certain homemade, unprocessed zest. The meat was delicious, blessedly devoid of the ganey tang that sometimes afflicts German burgers, and the bread was ample enough to contain the ingredients but forgiving enough for a leisurely bite.

Even after a substantial barbecue cheeseburger, portions of sweet potato fries and "dirty fries" smothered with bacon and cheese — the leftovers of family members who failed to finish in a timely fashion — and a shared brownie topped with ice cream and, remarkably, popcorn, I felt satisfied. But I lacked the feeling of uncomfortable fullness that is a common side effect of inferior burgers like the micro-



Burger Zone, located between Vogelweh and Ramstein bases in Kaiserslautern, Germany, is a worthy addition to the growing number of burger restaurants in the area.

wavable White Castle packages from the commissary.

As JFK unknowingly prophesied decades prior, there's a lot of competition on the

Kaiserslautern burger scene. But there's definitely room for Burger Zone.

broome.gregory@stripes.com  
Twitter: @broomestripes

## BURGER ZONE

**Location:** Kaiserstrasse 77, Kaiserslautern.

**Hours:** Open Tuesday-Friday from 4 p.m.-10 p.m. and weekends and holidays from 12 p.m.-10 p.m.

**Prices:** A basic hamburger costs 8 euros (\$8.81); deluxe burgers and extra toppings can bring that total over 10 euros. Fries range from 2 euros for an individual-sized order of basic fries to 6 euros for an extra-large sharable

plate of sweet potato fries, truffle fries or dirty fries with cheese and bacon.

**Menu:** Mostly a wide variety of burgers and fries, supplemented by hot dogs, salads and grilled entrees. Drink selections include lemonades, soft drinks, coffees and an extensive bar.

**Information:** Online: kl.burger-zone.de or on Facebook: @burgerzonekl.  
— Gregory Broome

## 'Gratest' little gadget

BECKY KRISTAL  
The Washington Post

I'm a big fan of the humble rasp-style grater. It's a go-to in my kitchen, as well as the Food Lab, where we have two often in use at the same time.

The tool is synonymous with Microplane, the brand most of us think of when it comes to rasp-style graters.

How can you make the most of this handheld wonder in your cooking?

What it is. A rasp-style grater (also sometimes referred to as a zester) is a long, skinny tool. Attached to the handle is a blade covered in tiny U-shaped teeth. Imagine your box grater but on a much smaller scale. It's beautiful in its simplicity and utility, really. Plus, they're pretty affordable, with most brands setting you back between \$10 and \$20.

It's an ideal tool for when you want a very fine texture of an ingredient. I use mine the most for citrus zest. After that, I favor it for grating ginger, frozen for extra ease. You can grate garlic, too. It is pretty much the only tool you'll want to pull out for freshly grated nutmeg (or cinnamon). Create easy, elegant garnishes for dishes with a feathery pile of grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or chocolate.

How to use it. Decide how to use it based on comfort and what you're grating. When zesting citrus, I like to hold the fruit in one hand and grate with the teeth facing up so that the zest collects in the channel and I can see how much I've gotten. Other times, I will grate directly into a bowl or onto the food, as with cheese. For citrus, I usually move the grater over top of the food. For nutmeg or chunks of cheese, I like to move the food and keep the grater stationary. Do what feels natural and safe. One thing to keep in mind regardless of how you work it is the direction you grate in. The teeth do their job when the food comes across them against the grain so that they can grip and grate the food.

Be safe. A rasp-style grater is not quite so scary as say, a mandoline, but you should still use caution. First, know when to stop grating. You are not going to get every last bit of ginger or nutmeg. Stop while you're ahead. Keeping your fingertips well clear of the blade. For extra safety, you can wear a cut-resistant glove. To avoid a different type of injury, don't keep the teeth sharp, always store the grater in the protective case it came in.

Caring for it. I have found it's easier to clean a rasp-style grater as soon as you're done using it. Often tapping out any excess food and a quick wash under running water is all you need. As with knives, dry immediately.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe



PHOTOS BY MARK JOHANSSON, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Mikael Vinka stands on top of a traditional goathie home at his Sami Ecologue near Amnarnas, Sweden.

# Tracing ancestry

## Following the DNA trail through Sweden

By MARK JOHANSSON  
Chicago Tribune

**S**moke billowed out of a hole at the center of a grass-covered tepee as I passed plates of cured moose sausage, flat bread, cheese and cloudberry jam to the seven other strangers gathered in this traditional Sami home in Sweden's northernmost Lapland region.

This was a complete digital detox: no electricity, cell signal or running water. Outside the conical dwelling (called a goathie in the indigenous Sami language), the air threatened to dip below freezing. Yet, with my toes curled into a reindeer pelt and the central fire invoking another round of storytelling, none of the modern sacrifices seemed to matter.

Owner Mikael Vinka regaled us with stories of herding his reindeer across the snow-dusted forests that blanket Sweden's Arctic frontier — a region the Sami call Sapmi. Over the next three days, he led us hiking into the birch-topped Vindel Mountains. We dared our bodies to enter a frigid lake before defrosting them in a fire-heated sauna. At night, we chased the faint chartreuse glow of the northern lights across an untainted sky.

When, on the final day, Mikael urged us to sit on a mossy mound and feel the energy of the realm, the cynic in me wanted to crack. But I couldn't. Mikael had spoken of Lapland with such doe-eyed sincerity. He connected so deeply with his environment that he could disappear into it for days. I wanted that kind of unburdened freedom. I needed to feel what he felt too.

To reach the Vinka family's Sami Ecologue meant a four-

hour drive from the regional airport in Lulea to the hamlet of Amnarnas, followed by a 45-minute boat ride into the vast wilderness of Vindelfallen Nature Reserve, one of the largest protected areas in Europe. I came all this way not only to purge myself from the trappings of cellphones, social media, work and city noise, but also to embark on a spiritual journey to try to discover who I am at my core.

Like an increasing number of Americans, I've become curious about my heritage. How (if at all) has it molded me into the person I've become? Results from one of those ubiquitous DNA kits suggest the highest percentage of my genetic code is from Sweden, so it felt like as good a place as any to begin.

I split my journey into three parts, each with a distinct objective. First I'd explore the geography — Sweden's famous wildlands — with those who maintain the deepest connection to them in the 21st century: the Sami. Then I'd head south to uncover the history of my great grandfather's journey to America in the seaport of Gothenburg. Finally, I'd connect with the people — specifically a few distant relatives — to see what of the national character I could find lingering in myself.

My stay in the far north taught me that woodlands and rivers and overgrown ravines are not just feral spots on an ever-busier map; they're our link to sanity, a global necessity and a Swedish birthright given to those lucky enough to live in a nation where 69% of the land is forested.

For the next stage of my journey — the history leg — I had to leave the musky dew of Lapland behind for the salty air of south-

erly Gothenburg.

It was from this industrial seaport along the rocky Bohuslan Coast that most of the 1.3 million Swedes who departed for a new life in America between 1850 and 1930 took their final steps on Swedish soil. After checking in at New York's Castle Garden (from 1855) or Ellis Island (from 1892), the majority settled in Chicago, Minneapolis and the greater Midwest, where the landscape and climate resembled home.

Swedes make up a tiny fraction of the American quilt, but this mass exodus of nearly 25% of the population left a big mark on Sweden. To learn more, I visited the House of Emigrants, a small museum in the city's old Customs House (now a casino), from which nearly all Swedish emigrants passed.

The museum looks at the reasons Swedes emigrated to America, the ship lines that took them there and what they left behind. In my great-grandfather Carl Johansson's case, it was a shot at a better life, the White Star Line (1911), and everything he knew and loved — along with the extra "s" in his surname, discarded for simplicity's sake in his adopted homeland.

So important was this mass emigration to Sweden's history that one of its most popular reality TV shows, "The Great Swedish Adventure" ("Allt för Sverige"), invites Americans with Swedish ancestry to come back and discover their roots. Like any good show, however, there's a catch: Along the way, cast members are kicked off for losing cultural and physical challenges. Only the winner meets their Swedish relatives for a family reunion.

I saved myself the humiliation



Mikael Vinka shares ancestral knowledge of the Swedish forest passed down by his indigenous Sami relatives.



Sweden's second largest city, Gothenburg, was the main port of departure for emigrants who flocked to America from 1850-1930.

of losing a Swedish reality show by contacting the descendants of Carl's sister, Gerda, directly.

Gerda's great-granddaughter, Camilla Sandell, lives in a lovingly restored falu red cottage in the countryside just outside Gothenburg. When she heard I'd be in town, she bought loads of crustaceans from a local fisherman, set a table with white wine and nutty Vasterbotten cheese, and invited the extended family for a crayfish party — a feast typical of Sweden's West Coast, where the critters run wild.

It's a strange thing to meet a family who shares some of your bloodlines but grew up in another land, speaks a different language and has its own customs. Yet it's equally bizarre how little that seems to matter by the second glass of wine. In fact, it struck me sitting at that dinner table with 10 Swedes that my preference for deference, for humility, for having enough of a personality but not too much to cause a scene makes me rather Swedish at my core.

My parents had visited some of these relatives in Sweden a decade prior. They put together a genealogy-inspired DVD for me and my siblings and gave it to us for Christmas. To say I was mildly intrigued would be generous.

I've spent most of my adult life

traveling the globe for work, but never once put Sweden on the agenda. I can't say why. As a kid, the mere fact of having the most popular last name in Sweden was enough for me to cheer for their soccer team in World Cups and study the country for geography projects. It was always the most tangible connection I had to somewhere else.

But to visit? Perhaps it wasn't exotic enough. I've always been attracted to everything wholly foreign, so it was quite a surprise to find during my two weeks in Sweden that something startlingly familiar, something in my DNA, could shock my senses even more.

When all the crayfish were decapitated and wine bottles emptied, Camilla reached into her closet for a box. Inside was a black top hat, the kind you might see in period movies, from another shared relative named Axel Johansson. The newspapers protecting it were from the 1940s. Despite my protests, she wanted me to have it.

There's an old Swedish fable about a hat that takes on a new life with each person who wears it. If I brought my long dead relative's hat back home with me, Camilla said, I would not only have something to remember them by, but the hat could have a new story.



# Overtourism threatens more cities

By HANNAH SAMPSON  
The Washington Post

Amsterdam, Venice, Barcelona, Paris — the poster children for overtourism are well-known. Now, 20 more cities are on alert lest they turn into the future face of the problem, according to a new report from the World Travel & Tourism Council and commercial real estate firm JLL.

The report, called "Destination 2030," examines the tourism "readiness" of 50 destinations around the world. The "emerging performers" category includes destinations where infrastructure and tourism momentum are growing along with the pressures associated with more tourists. Those cities were Bangkok; Cape Town, South Africa; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Istanbul; Jakarta, Indonesia; Mexico City; and New Delhi.

The study adds a fresh layer to the ongoing conversation over how much tourism is too much, and how both iconic and emerging destinations can cope with the world's apparently insatiable appetite for travel.

"Over the past few years ... several destinations, and cities in particular, have been criticized in the media for the under-management of travel and tourism and the stresses that visitor numbers have put on urban systems and residents," the report said. Laura Ferroni, JLL's global head of hotels and hospitality research, said the cities that are already the busiest — the Amsterdam and the Madrids — have to think about tourism through a different lens.

"Those cities are the ones that are going to start focusing less on attracting a whole lot of new visitors," he says. Instead, they have to shift their focus to dispersing crowds throughout their city and encouraging visitors to come at off-peak times.

The new research comes as policy groups and travel industry watchers try to define overtourism, quantify its toll and address ways for destinations to combat it. The World Tourism Organization, an agency of the United Nations, said that last year, there were 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals around the world. That total represented a 6 percent increase over the previous year, and the agency said arrivals were expected to grow another 3 to 4 percent this year.

Last year, a European Union report identified 105 destinations in some state of overtourism. And Responsible Travel, a UK-based travel company, put together an overtourism map that includes 98 destinations across 63 countries.

Justin Francis, CEO and co-founder of Responsible Travel, says the overtourism issue has only recently become a front-and-center issue as travel numbers continue to rise.

"Very few destinations even have tourism planning, let alone have figured out how to solve the problem," he says. "I think it's a crisis."

## Germany DIRECTORY

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## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Pacific



# Powder perfect

## Ideal snow conditions are practically guaranteed on Hokkaido ski vacation

By DINA MISHEV

Special to The Washington Post

**M**y whoops of glee come often and involuntarily, and each results in a mouthful of snow. Skiing several feet of fresh, untracked powder in Daisetsuzan National Park on Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's main islands, I feel like I'm bouncing around inside a cumulus cloud.

Skiers call this "getting face shots." For those able to ski powder, face shots are the holy grail. If you spend three weeks a winter skiing in the Rockies, you might get them on only several runs. Face shots require significant, fluffy snowfall and untracked slopes. The former isn't that rare — on average, ski resorts in the Western United States get about 400 inches of snow a year — but the frenzy that usually accompanies fresh snow ensures that the latter disappear within hours.

Skiing in Hokkaido for a week in January, my legs give out long before the face shots do, which was exactly what I had hoped for.

Planning a powder ski vacation any more than a few days in advance is like trying to predict the stock market — unless you're going to Hokkaido in January. On average, more than one-third of the island's annual 600 inches of snow arrives during the first month of the year. During an average January week, it snows six of seven days. January in Hokkaido isn't "January" but "Japowuary."

Hokkaido is more than skiing and #powmageddon, though. The island has even more onsens, or geothermal hot springs, than it does ski resorts. (And it has about 100 ski resorts.) Onsens are a thing all over Japan — there are about 3,000 in the country, and archaeological finds hint that some of them have been used since 3000 B.C. — but they seem particularly well paired with skiing.

After being taken to an onsen at the end of my first ski day, I visit a different one on each of the next six evenings. For a spring to be

an onsen, a 1948 law states it must contain at least one of 19 specified minerals and be no colder than 77 degrees Fahrenheit. In Hokkaido, I soak in sulfide pools, chloride pools and "simple springs" that have minerals, but in low concentrations; I do not soak in any pool that is less than 96 degrees.

By the end of my vacation, I was convinced it was only because of my daily soaks that I was able to ski hip-deep snow — and ski up through hip-deep snow — for seven straight days.

Most powder skiers who come to Hokkaido are perfectly satisfied skiing the island's resorts. Even the busiest resort here — Niseko United, which is actually a collection of four resorts — gets only a fraction of the skiers that big U.S. resorts do. While all the runs at my home hill, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in Wyoming, are tracked out by noon the day after a big storm, friends tell me they've skied untracked powder at Niseko United as late as four days after a storm.

I prefer backcountry skiing, also called ski touring, to resort skiing, though. Backcountry skiers eschew ski resorts and lifts in favor of remote mountains, climbing skins and specialized skis, bindings and boots. Skiing uphill is called "skinny" because the original climbing skins, which are affixed to skis' bases and allow skis to glide forward but not backward, were made from sealskin. (Today's climbing skins are most often made from mohair or nylon.) It's like hiking on skis, except you don't have to kill your knees by walking downhill. When ready to descend, backcountry skiers remove their climbing skins, transition their bindings and boots, and then ski down as if on regular Alpine skiing gear.

Specialized gear isn't the only requirement of backcountry skiing, though. Because it is done away from the safety of ski resorts and ski patrol, it is essential for backcountry skiers to understand how to travel in avalanche terrain and have knowledge of the local snowpack. I have experience with the former but am ignorant about Hokkaido's snowpack.

To overcome this deficiency, I have signed up to be one of eight clients on a seven-day backcountry trip led by ski guides from the Leavenworth, Wash.-based Northwest Mountain School. The guides are American but have been studying Hokkaido's weather and snow since the start of the season.

Despite the extra education and physical effort backcountry skiing requires, I think it's worth it. I find skinning meditative, and there's no beating when you and your ski partners have an entire slope — or even an entire mountain — to yourselves. Backcountry skiing also allows for the exploration of areas not otherwise accessible. On Hokkaido, this includes the majority of Daisetsuzan National Park and all of Mount Yotei.

Daisetsuzan is the largest of Japan's 34 national parks and is home to dozens of skinnable mountains, including some active volcanoes. Yotei is a 6,227-foot-tall volcano near Niseko that, because its symmetrical shape resembles that of Mount Fuji, Japan's most famous mountain, is often called the "Mount Fuji of Hokkaido." The island's indigenous people, the Ainu, believe Yotei was the first place created on earth and the spot from which the entire landmass of Hokkaido formed.

I'd love to climb and ski Mount Yotei, but after meeting in Sapporo, Hokkaido's most populous city, our group heads for the pastoral center of the island and Daisetsuzan. Skiing Yotei requires visibility, which requires it to stop snowing. Snow is forecast for the next three days.

As poor as Japowuary is for skiing Yotei, it is perfect for Daisetsuzan. You don't want to ski Yotei in a snowstorm because so much of it is higher than the elevation above which trees can grow. Without trees for reference, it's easy to get lost; vertigo is also possible. Daisetsuzan National Park is as thick with trees as it is with mountains. Hokkaido is home to 22 percent of Japan's forests, many of which are in Daisetsuzan.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

## KNOW &amp; GO

### Northwest Mountain School

P.O. Box 329, Leavenworth, Wash.  
Phone: 509-548-5823  
Online: [mountainschool.com](http://mountainschool.com)  
Days are spent skiing powder with American guides and often end with a trip to a local onsen on this tour organized by the American company. Lodging for seven nights (singles extra), two American adventure guides, transportation from Sapporo, and most dinners and breakfasts about \$3,145.

### Kiroro Resort

128-1 Aza-Takiva  
Phone: 011-81-135-34-7118  
Online: [kiroro.co.jp](http://kiroro.co.jp)  
Lift-served runs and access to adjacent backcountry through gates (with signed waiver) about one hour from both Niseko and downtown Sapporo. Three- and six-hour, full-day, and nightknight lift tickets. Lifts open daily Nov. 23 to May 6. Adult lift tickets from about \$34.

### Furano Ski Resort

20-31 Kitanomine Furano  
Phone: 011-81-167-22-1111  
Online: [snowfurano.com](http://snowfurano.com)  
Lift-served groomed and powder runs with views of the Daisetsu Mountains and accessible by bus from Furano. More FIS Alpine Ski World Cup ski races (about 12) have been held here than at any other resort in Japan. Open daily Nov. 23 to May 6. Full-day adult lift tickets from about \$40.

### Niseko United

204 Aza Yamada  
Phone: 011-81-136-22-0109  
Online: [niseko.ne.jp/en](http://niseko.ne.jp/en)  
Hokkaido's largest ski resort is actually four separate ski areas, but they're connected, and one pass covers lift access to all four. Lifts operate on individual schedules; open daily 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 11 to May 6. Full-day adult lift tickets from about \$40.

### Ryounkaku Tokachidake

071-0500 Tokachidake Onsen  
Phone: 011-81-167-39-4111  
Online: [en.ryounkaku.jp](http://en.ryounkaku.jp)  
Indoor and outdoor hot spring pools and bathing areas separated by gender at the end of a road to Mount Tokachidake. Open daily 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. About \$7 for adults; kids 6 to 12 about \$3.50; 5 and younger free.

### More information

Online: [skiing-hokkaido.com](http://skiing-hokkaido.com)

PHOTOS BY DINA MISHEV  
FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Above:** Snowdrifts envelop the swimming pool at an onsen in Hokkaido.

**Top:** Northwest Mountain School co-founder John Race leads a group of backcountry skiers (not pictured) toward a small volcano near Niseko, Japan.

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

Pacific

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The park's name, fittingly, translates to "great snowy mountains." The snow banks along the road into the park are twice as tall as our van. In the 20 minutes it takes the group to gear up at the trailhead, half an inch of snow falls. I know this because I accidentally drop a glove when I exit the van, and when I find it just before we start skinning, it is buried. I pick it up and the flakes fall off like strands of icicle down. Hokkaido's snow is about as dry as the driest powder found in the United States (generally in Utah).

From the parking lot, we walk down to a braided river and, carrying our skis, carefully rock-hop across its thin channels. On the far bank, we click the toes of our boots into our bindings and start skinning.

Going at a moderate pace and stopping a couple of times to rest and eat prepackaged sushi and katsu sandwiches purchased at a 7-Eleven near the ski lodge where we're staying, it takes around 90 minutes to climb about 1,800 vertical feet. This doesn't bring us to the summit of anything, but since the falling snow limits visibility to about 30 feet, none of us cares. Within view is an open slope that doesn't have a single ski track on it. We all put on goggles and additional layers for the descent, take off our skis, and switch our bindings and boots from tour mode to ski mode.

It's difficult to tell how deep the powder we ski here is, but it's deep enough that I can't feel bottom. Bouncing down the slope, each of us weaving our own path between gnarled birch trees, we not only get face shots but send snow clouds billowing up and over our heads with every turn. I'm not the only one whooping with glee.

In Hokkaido, trees, especially conifers, can become so entombed in snow and ice that they're swollen to three or four times their normal size and are no longer identifiable as trees. They instead look like T. rexes, or Godzilla or Jabba the Hutt. So transformed, these trees are called juhyo, or snow monsters. At the bottom of this run, with every inch of me covered in snow, I wonder what sort of juhyo I make.

And then, because there's no chance we're not doing a second lap, we all agree this is the deepest, lightest snow we've ever skied — everyone puts climbing skins back on their skis. This time we skin a little slower, but skiing down, our enthusiasm is, like the quality of the snow, undiminished.



PHOTOS BY MATT BURKE/Stars and Stripes

Ryu's Dining in Okinawa, Japan, looks unassuming but offers some of the best food on the island.

# Chinese food perfection

## Best authentic cuisine awaits at Ryu's Dining

BY MATT M. BURKE  
Stars and Stripes

**C**hinese food back home in Massachusetts always consisted of greasy, over-battered chicken fingers, tough-as-leather strips of teriyaki beef; Rangoons devoid of any crab; and fried rice that tasted like it was already a day old.

Japan provided a dramatic improvement. Yet I realize now, having never traveled to China myself, that I've never had authentic Chinese food in my life. That is, until I dined at Ryu's Dining in Kitanakagusuku, Okinawa.

Ryu's Dining serves authentic, traditional Chinese cuisine made from recipes going back more than a half-century. Some of the dishes boast a flavor profile made up of 20 unique Chinese spices regularly procured in Shanghai and brought back to Okinawa.

The proprietor of the establishment, known affectionately to patrons as "Dragon," was a high-end chef in Shanghai, then Tokyo, before opening the first iteration of Ryu's Dining in Chatan. Dragon quickly built a loyal following.

About a year ago, he moved to Kitanakagusuku. It wasn't long before Dragon's reputation caught up with the new digs, which became the place to dine in Okinawa city. Now, reservations are encouraged to ensure a seat at the table.

Dragon, with slicked-back hair and a warm, affable demeanor, is downright passionate about food and traditional Chinese cuisine. He refuses to change the recipes to make them more friendly to foreign palates. He doesn't allow his food to be taken to go because it would degrade the product.

Instead of buying pre-ground spice mixtures in Shanghai, he brings them back



AFTER  
HOURS  
OKINAWA

whole and grinds them himself shortly before serving to ensure freshness and flavor.

He often makes recommendations to first-timers on what to order. Overflowing with personality, he is like the world's best car salesman offering a ride on a true culinary journey.

Ryu's Dining offers small plates ranging from \$4.12 to \$7.24. Its specialties include cashew chicken — an absolute must — for \$6.32.

The chicken was transcendent, crispy on the outside, juicy on the inside, with hints of smoke, sweet and tang. The spiciest version comes with a dull but building heat that will leave you sweating without burning your mouth or sacrificing any of the flavor.

The Sichuan spicy mala soup for \$7.24 was the perfect blend of sweet, sour and spice, complete with ground meat, egg and vegetables, and aside from authentic Vietnamese pho, was arguably one of the best bowls of soup I have ever had.

The "Shanghai double rich tasty stir-fried egg rice," or fried rice, at \$7.24 was light and fluffy, simple, with a unique flavor I couldn't identify. Again, arguably the best I have ever had.

"Ryu's special dim sum" (\$5.50) is two large dumplings that come with a dipping sauce that boasts a wide array of Chinese spices. The dumplings were robust and



Top to bottom: Stir-fried chicken with cashew nuts; Crispy cream shrimp; Sichuan spicy mala soup.

## RYU'S DINING

Location: 311 Shimabuku, Kitanakagusuku, Nakagami District, Okinawa 901-2301

Hours: Open daily, 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.  
Prices: Dishes range from \$4.12 to \$7.24.

Dress: Casual

Directions: After passing the Aeon Okinawa Rycom Mall on your right on Route 85, take a left at the second set of lights. Ryu's Dining is on the right side, across the street from King Tacos, about a quarter-mile up the road.

Information: 998-932-0121. Reservations are recommended.

— Matthew M. Burke

hearty, the meat and vegetable filling inside was light and clean, and the sauce was like nothing I have ever tasted before.

Other standouts include the crispy, creamy shrimp for \$7.24 and the special pickled cucumber for \$4.12.

Ryu's Dining also offers a wide array of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, from classic cocktails to Chinese beer, fruit juices, soda and Chinese tea. There is a \$1.10 service charge, according to the menu. Ryu's Dining has the best Chinese food I have ever had. It might even be the best food I've ever had. That's a bold statement, but one I would be hard-pressed to convince me better Chinese food exists anywhere else, including in the People's Republic.

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EXPLORING THE  
BEAUTY ACROSS  
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## WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Above: Spotting bighorn sheep by the river was a highlight of the trip.

Below: The emerald pool and vivid rocks and green ferns made Elves Chasm a special spot.



# What a rush!

Rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon is an 'amazing, beautiful, adventurous' experience



PHOTOS BY DOUG HANSEN, THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE/TNS

Only the brave — or the overheated — volunteered to sit in the front of the raft during the big rapids. At mile 187, the rafting group was whisked away by a helicopter, below, to a nearby ranch.

By DOUG HANSEN  
The San Diego Union-Tribune

August 15, 1869: The red sandstone cliffs rose more than 2,000 feet on either side, shutting out the sun for most of the day, while before us the mighty river, lashed to a foam, rushed on with indescribable power.

John Wesley Powell, first person to explore the full length of the Grand Canyon's Colorado River

Exactly 150 years after Powell wrote that entry in his journal, I find myself fulfilling a lifelong dream as I float down the Colorado River on a large inflatable raft with 13 other adventurers and two guides. The air is hot, but cool breezes intermittently rise from the cold river water to deflect the heat. Beneath us, the olive-green water rushes through the greatest geologic chasm in the world, the iconic Grand Canyon. All of us are silent as we absorb the majesty of this natural spectacle.

To travel through the Grand Canyon is to time-travel through the geological history of the Earth for the past 2 billion years. Vividly tinted rock formations display an artist's palette of red, gray, yellow, tan, black and white hues. There are layers folded like pretzels by forces we cannot imagine. Atop some cliffs are formations that resemble medieval fortresses. But the most difficult geological lesson for me to grasp lies in the rock strata — a mind-bending story of radically changing landscapes alternatively covered in oceans, swamps, deserts and grassy plains.

I am on a six-day rafting trip with Western River Expeditions, during which we will travel down what Powell called "the grandest canyon in the world." Our journey begins with a predawn meeting in Las Vegas; an hourlong flight over a barren, broken landscape; and a final chance to purchase beer and wine at the only store at Marble Canyon, near Lee's Ferry, our launching point. There are 28 people embarking on this journey, comprised mainly of two groups of longtime friends from Washington and Vermont. At first, I feel slightly out of place as a solo traveler, but that doesn't last long as the warmhearted Washington folks welcome me to their group.

After piles of supplies and our duffel bags are unloaded from large trailers, our guides advise us to select the gear for our large dry bag, which will be inaccessible until the end of the day, while storing day-essentials in a smaller dry bag. We put on life jackets, which are mandatory aboard the raft. Suddenly a shout arises from our leaders: "Form a fire line. We need to load everything onto the rafts!" We pass bags and boxes from one person to the next, a simple act that gives me an encouraging

affirmation of human capability through teamwork.

At last we shove off on the great adventure that we arranged nearly 18 months ago, a delay caused by the high demand and limited supply of these Grand Canyon rafting trips. Our fearless leader, R.D. Tucker, pauses our rafts midriver and, as he will do repeatedly over the next six days, he mixes humor and 20 years of experience to explain what we need to do to stay safe and enjoy the journey. "Most rapids in the world have a difficulty scale of one to five," he tells us. "Here in the Grand Canyon, the scale is one to 10. We will run 60 rapids along 187 miles over the next six days. Most are just fun, splashy rapids, but a few are challenging and technically difficult."

This introduction to the river's might does little to assuage our apprehension about the infamous rapids that await us. They have names like Roaring 20's, Hermit, Serpentine and Sockdolager (an old slang term for a knock-out punch), but the two "Mighty Tens" — Crystal and Lava Rapids — cause the most concern. It doesn't help to hear that ABC stands for "Alive Below Crystal."

Our first level 3 or 4 rapids set our hearts racing, but we learn that our enormous J-Rig raft can handle rapids like Mike Tyson can handle punches. These rafts prove almost impossible to capsize, so gradually our confidence builds. I find myself shouting as a wave smacks me in the face, "Give me your best shot! Is that all you got?" Before we enter especially violent rapids, Tucker carefully explains what to expect and reminds us repeatedly, "Those in front need to hold onto the ropes tightly, bend over and SUCK RUBBER! Those behind need to SUCK VEST!"

While some sit perched safely above the fray on large storage boxes, or in the middle of the raft on pads, the bravest, or most foolish, of us take turns holding onto ropes for dear life at the front as we crash through seething rapids. Our payoff is not only pride for surviving the rapids but also the mixed blessing of having 48-degree water pounding us and cooling us off in the 105-degree heat.

Campsites are chosen by Tucker after five or six hours on the river, with instructions for us to find a camp spot then return for a fire line to unload supplies. The private and open-air toilets (nicknamed "room with a view") are set up a short distance away from camp. "If you're brushing, bathing or peeing and don't hit water, you're doing it wrong," said Tucker, who strictly enforces the Park Service's rules for keeping the natural environment pristine.

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## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## FROM PAGE 34

In addition, we learn how to set up our sleeping cot, tent and camp chair, a routine that soon becomes a natural part of our daily camp ritual.

Each evening, under a shimmering sea of stars, I listen to the overlapping sounds of high-pitched cicadas, talking and laughter from the camp chair circle, and the incessant roar of the river as it rushes past us like a freight train in perpetual motion.

The quality of the meals that our guides prepare each day makes up for the minor discomforts of summer heat, too-short cots and bugs in my face (only the first night). We are all astonished by the food. Our dinners include fresh grilled trout, baked potatoes with sour cream and chives, shrimp cocktails with cocktail sauce, steaks, grilled chicken, and ice cream with fruit compote topping. Our midday lunch consists of fresh fruit, chips and cookies, four kinds of bread and assorted meats. For sandwiches. Each morning, Tucker's 5:30 a.m. trumpeting of his conch shell announces that coffee is ready, followed by some combination of scrambled or fried eggs, pork chops, French toast, blueberry pancakes, bacon, sausage, oatmeal, fresh fruit, hot biscuits, bagels with cream cheese, orange juice, and coffee or tea. Large jugs of cold water and lemonade accompany us at all times on the rafts and at camp, so that we can stay well hydrated. Ample snacks during the voyage fill in the gaps between meals.

When we're not crashing through rapids, we eagerly scan the terrain for small herds of desert bighorn sheep as they rest along the river bank or prance across the face of vertical cliffs. Big blue herons and turkey vultures appear regularly. But the star attraction is the mesmerizing kaleidoscope of rocks and cliffs surrounding us. I never tire of watching them.

Each day we stop for short hikes to slot canyons, waterfalls and a hidden grotto filled with green moss, ferns and an azure pool. My favorite places are the milky blue Little Colorado River, where I merrily slide 100 yards down a small, slick rapid, and Havasu Creek, whose vivid turquoise waters form swim holes with small cascading falls.

Alas, as all good things must end, we reach an unremarkable place on the river where a flat piece of ground serves as a helicopter landing pad. A 10-minute flight takes us to a nearby ranch where we shower and eat lunch before our flight back to Las Vegas.

While waiting for my flight, I have time to reflect on this unique journey that has showcased the magnificence of the Grand Canyon from a perspective that few will ever see. My newfound friends and I agree that we feel a renewed sense of oneness with self, others and nature. As one New Yorker exclaims, "It was amazing, beautiful, adventurous, fun, exciting and spiritual all at the same time."

# Where's my luggage?

## Airlines seek to reduce their biggest headache

By HUGO MARTIN  
Los Angeles Times

**O**n a September vacation to celebrate their wedding anniversary, Marci and Eric Rose landed in Greece on an American Airlines flight and were notified by the airline's smartphone app that their baggage was waiting for them at the baggage carousel.

The app was wrong. The luggage made the first leg of the trip, from Los Angeles International Airport to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, but had not been loaded into the plane to Greece, despite what the app said. The mishap forced the Simi Valley, Calif., couple to buy clothes and toiletries until the bags were found and sent to Athens — soaking wet — 2½ days later.

"It was beyond frustrating," said Marci Rose, a business manager. "I cried. I didn't have any clothes to wear. There was nothing we could do."

The nation's largest airlines have invested millions of dollars in technology over the past eight years to give passengers the ability to track their bags in hopes of addressing the biggest headache of flying: losing luggage. More than three-quarters of airlines worldwide plan to offer their passengers that tracking power by 2020.

But the Roses' mishap — and social media complaining — shows that luggage tracking technology is far from 100% accurate.

The weak link? People.

"When it involves humans, you will always get errors," said Peter Drummond, portfolio director for baggage at SITA, an international airline technology company.

A SITA study released in March found that 26% of airline passengers worldwide used a mobile device last year to keep track of their luggage, up

from 14% in 2017. An earlier SITA study said 77% of airlines plan to offer passengers real-time baggage tracking information by sometime next year.

The bag-tracking technology varies by airline but all carriers rely on workers, at some point in the loading and unloading of luggage, to manually scan the luggage tags.

The accuracy of the system can be degraded, experts say, if airline workers forget to scan a bag or if the luggage tag falls off.

The overall rate of lost or mishandled luggage by all carriers has plummeted in the past decade thanks to airline investments in new luggage and tracking technology.

Industry experts say the rate is likely to continue to drop as long as the tracking systems become more automated and less reliant on humans.

"The fewer points of contact with humans, the more accurate the system will be," said Madhu Unnikrishnan, editor of Airline Weekly.

American, United and Delta, three of the world's largest carriers, offer passengers free luggage tracking services that let them monitor the status of their suitcases at several points along each flight, through a smartphone app, text messages or email alerts.

Alaska Airlines plans to offer a tracking app next year.

Southwest Airlines completed installation of 3,400 scanners to improve its baggage tracking system this month. But the Dallas-based carrier isn't working on an app so that passengers can track their own luggage.

"There are no immediate plans to offer an external baggage tracking app as this is currently an effort to enhance our internal tracking systems," said Southwest spokesman Brian Parrish.

Once the luggage is scanned and the information is uploaded into the airline's tracking system, it is relayed to airline passengers' smartphones or email accounts.

Experts say an older tracking system that relies on luggage tags printed with bar codes — like those on grocery store items — is not as accurate as newer technology involving radio frequency identification devices (RFID) that emit a signal read by a sensor.

American and United use luggage tags with a bar code to track the bags. A human with a scanning device must scan each bar code when the luggage is loaded or unloaded on a plane.

American Airlines says it is considering switching to a new technology for its luggage tracking system but declined to disclose any details about that switch.

"We're currently developing new technology that will support our baggage loading process," American Airlines spokesman Curtis Blessing said. "The improvements will allow our guests to view scans of their baggage through

our app and should be ready in 2020."

Delta Air Lines became the first major carrier to offer a luggage tracking app in 2011, initially using a luggage tag with bar code that corresponds to a passenger's travel itinerary. But in 2016, Delta began the switch to tags embedded with RFID chips.

The RFID is scanned by a Delta worker or the signal is picked up by dozens of stationary sensors on belt loaders and elsewhere in the loading process. When Delta switched to RFID tags, the airline touted the new technology as having "a 99.9% success rate."

Delta representatives say the RFID technology is more accurate than using bar-coded tags because most of the tracking with RFID tags can be done by stationary sensors. Luggage tags with bar codes must be scanned manually.

Delta noted, however, that it partners with international airlines, and not all of them use tracking systems that can communicate with Delta's luggage tracking app.

The International Air Transport Association, which represents the world's largest carriers, passed a resolution in June 2018 calling on all airlines to install baggage tracking technology and recommended that they rely on RFID-embedded tags to track bags.

"RFID is a more cost-efficient method to achieve the industry's target of 100% bag tracking than using existing bar code technology," the trade group said in a statement.

The luggage debate endured by Marci Rose in Greece was not an isolated case.

David Razowsky, an improvisation teacher from Los Angeles, said he flies more than 200,000 miles a year for his job, and the American Airlines tracking app is often wrong about which baggage carousel his luggage can be found on after landing.

"The app is wrong 9 out of 10 times," he said. "It doesn't help that there isn't any American employee who knows what's going on either."

American Airlines is not the only carrier that has drawn complaints over its tracking system. Passengers have complained on social media sites about problems with tracking apps offered by United and Delta.

In response to a request to discuss the accuracy of its luggage tracking technology, United Airlines issued a statement, saying: "As with all technology, we continue to innovate, work on advancements, including improvements in each of our monthly app updates. Overall, customer feedback reflects positive experiences since launching this tool."

Blessing, the American Airlines spokesman, acknowledged that the carrier's tracking app is not supposed to send passengers the wrong information about their luggage, as was the case with the Roses.

He said he doesn't know how often such errors occur but added that the tracking software is employed by 34,000 passengers a day and "one-off issues do occur."

Such an explanation doesn't sit well with Marci Rose, whose luggage was left on the tarmac during a rainstorm in Chicago before making its soggy trip to Athens.

She said she doesn't plan on flying American Airlines in the future and will always be suspicious of luggage tracking technology, regardless of which airline offers it.

The technology told us the luggage was in the country we were in, and it wasn't," she said. "Of course I'll be suspicious. Why wouldn't I be suspicious?"



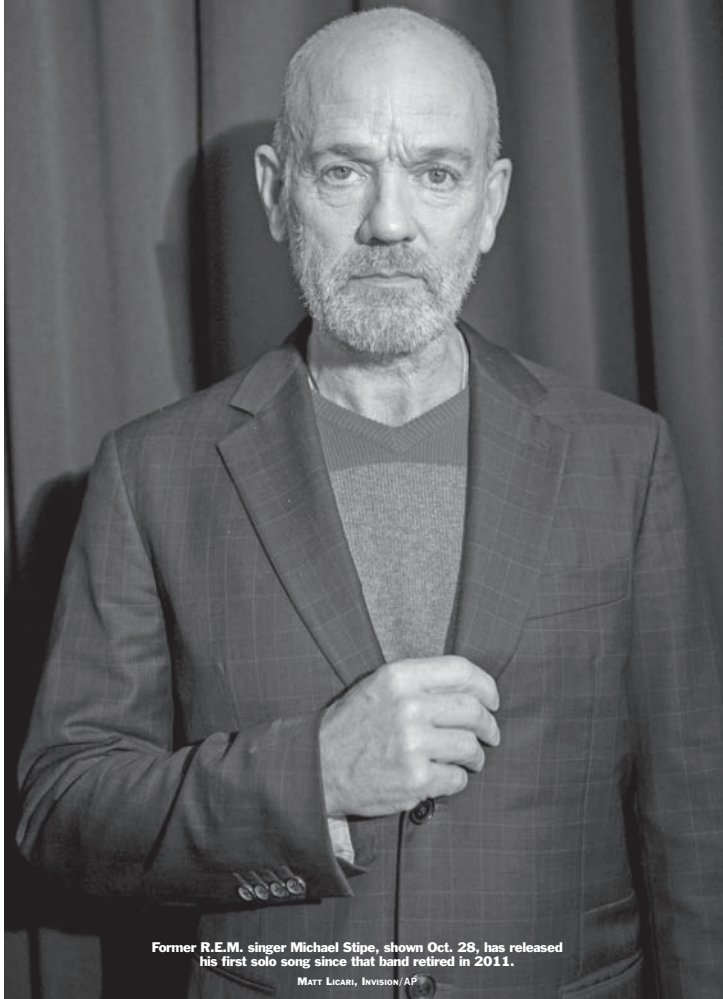
iStock

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

By DAVID BAUDER  
Associated Press

# Old and new come together

Former frontman releases first solo effort,  
celebrates 25 years of R.E.M.



Former R.E.M. singer Michael Stipe, shown Oct. 28, has released his first solo song since that band retired in 2011.

MATT LICARI, INVISION/AP

After Michael Stipe opens a gate to the abandoned Manhattan storefront that serves as his studio, you find a man easily traversing his past, present and future creative lives. He's promoting a 25th anniversary package of the R.E.M. album "Monster" while excited by the response to the first single he's released since the band's 2011 retirement. Surrounding him are examples of the photography and visual art that has occupied much of his time since then.

He made the single "Your Capricious Soul" available first on his website last month with proceeds going to the environmental group Extinction Rebellion. He held it back from streaming services for a month, a quiet protest against monopolistic behavior, but it's there now.

The song's throbbing electronic pulse and percussion mark a clean musical break from the guitar-based rock of R.E.M.

Stipe would generally write lyrics to R.E.M. songs with music composed by bandmates Peter Buck, Mike Mills and, until he left the band in 1997, Bill Berry. With "Your Capricious Soul," it was all on him.

"It's terrifying," he said. "That's why I'm doing it."

Pleased by the reaction, Stipe said he expects more new music soon. He has no record company, so he's free to release it whenever and however he wants.

"It sounds great," said Rita Houston, program director at WFUV-FM in New York. "It sounds fantastic to hear Michael's voice on the radio in this new incarnation. The song sounds nothing like an R.E.M. song, but it sounds completely like Michael Stipe. It's very 2019."

Now 59, Stipe easily rewinds the clock to 1994 when R.E.M. was at the height of its popularity. After two relatively quiet and commercial records, "Out of Time" and "Automatic for the People," R.E.M. wanted to crack the volume with songs that would contrast on a concert stage to hits like "Man on the Moon." They were touring for the first time in five years, with millions of new fans.

On "Monster," they embraced glam rock, influenced by forebears like T. Rex and the New York Dolls, as well as contemporaries like "Achtung Baby"-era U2. The signature track was "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?," its title inspired by an odd phrase someone once shouted at newsmen Dan Rather.

"I can't believe looking back ... that we had the audacity and the courage to jump off a cliff together, not literally but figuratively, to create something sounding so different from the records before," he said.

The new "Monster" has the requisite outtakes that illustrate how the songs took shape in the studio. Stipe recognizes that fans like hearing the progression, but he finds it excruciating. He listened to the outtakes once.

"To pull the curtain back that far is a bit humiliating, frankly," he said. "I want people to think of me as this perfect genius who emerged completely into the world. Of course, that's not the case."

Stipe exhibits a vulnerability, a sensitive side that he takes pride in. In R.E.M.'s early years, he'd often sing from the shadows, his back to the audience. His shyness never left, but he developed into a confident rock frontman.

He came out as gay at the time of the album's release, feeling some pressure because rumors spread that he was HIV-positive when the band didn't tour for two albums and he didn't give interviews for a lengthy period.

"I was never closeted," he said. "That's the thing that's beautiful about it and I'm so proud of. You can never find a single picture of me pretending to have a girlfriend or being somebody that I'm not. I was never that guy. Any longstanding R.E.M. fan who had not figured out I was queer before that point wasn't looking very hard."

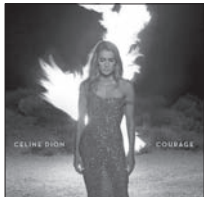
R.E.M.'s retirement in 2011 was a model. There was no farewell tour, and they released a valedictory song — "We All Go Back to Where We Belong" — that is among the most beautiful in the band's catalog. Stipe, Buck and Mills haven't regretted the decision, and Stipe suggests it salvaged their friendship.

Buck and Mills both remain active musically as Stipe, until recently, stuck to visual art. The business of R.E.M. forges on as the band has methodically marked key points in their career with new projects.

"Encapsulating the creative work of the band by disbanding allowed us, and I think the rest of the world, to take a step back and look at it for what it was," Stipe said. "We were not the guys who were going to always be there, and I think that did us a huge favor, honestly."

## WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

## WHAT'S NEW



## Celine Dion

Courage (Columbia Records)

The search is officially over: If you've been wondering what the saddest song of 2019 is, we've found it. It's on Celine Dion's new album, "Courage."

Track No. 11, "For the Lover That I Lost," will have you weeping for two good reasons — one of the songwriters is Sam Smith, that master of grief, while the singer herself is still mourning twin deaths.

"I laid a dozen roses for the lover that I lost / I stand by all my choices even though I paid the cost," Dion sings.

"Courage" is her first English-language album since the passing of her husband, Rene Angelil, and brother, Daniel, only two days apart in 2016. Dion has dealt with the losses before on her French album "Encore un soir," released seven months after the deaths, and this time she's moving gingerly forward.

There are soaring ballads of lost love but mostly indicators of hope and perseverance, like when she sings "I'm flying on my own (on the wings of your love)" on "Flying on My Own" and on the title track, where she vows to

keep going: "Courage don't you dare fail me now."

"I have missed you, so heavily / But the weight's kind of lifting," she sings on the gospel-lifted, "I Will Be Stronger," adding: "I don't feel like giving up just because you climbed off."

There are even stems shooting up new love — the '60s throwback "How Did You Get Here" and the gentle piano ballad written by Skylar Grey called "Falling in Love Again." The cover of the album shows Dion walking away from flames, her dress sullied, a woman bowed but not broken.

Since Dion isn't a songwriter, it's not always easy to know what she's going through. But what she chooses to add her titanic voice to can tell volumes. And the 16-track "Courage" is a very strong, mature pop album with modern and EDM touches showcasing one of the world's most jaw-dropping vocalists, this time often rawer than we are used to. Dion is like a sonic chameleon that changes colors depending on who is nearby and this time Sia is around for two very Sia songs ("Baby" and "Lying Down" with David Guetta), but there are also offerings from such longtime collaborators as Liz Rodriguez and Jorgen Elofsson.

The standard edition album ends with the spacey, dark and melancholy "Perfect Goodbye" — and Dion even slips in the rare curse word. She's angry. "Don't need to understand if God's got a plan / It's out of our hands anyway," she sings. We're just glad her heart will go on.

— Mark Kennedy  
Associated Press



## Bonnie 'Prince' Billy

I Made a Place (Drag City)

Will Oldham, appearing here under his Bonnie "Prince" Billy alter ego, has made too much music in the past decade to list here, but "I Made a Place" is his first album of new, original songs since 2011's "Wolfgang Goes to Town," and it's another peak in a career with few valleys.

Oldham says the record was inspired by Hawaii and its music — his mother was born in Pearl Harbor — while also carrying the imprint of his wife's pregnancy. Its shades of folk and country were achieved with assistance from, among others, Joan Shelley on vocals, guitarist Nathan Salsburg and multi-instrumentalist Jacob Duncan.

"New Memory Box" is a

merry opening track enlivened by horns and winds as it recommends taking a step back: "A quiet life might be / The way through it all." It's followed by "Dream Awhile," a kind of lullaby that upholds the easygoing outlook — "When I have a problem / I know just what to do / I go to bed and dream awhile / Something will come through."

Its title inspired by a Hawaiian custom, Oldham makes "Look Backward on Your Future, Look Forward to Your Past" a tale about the consequences of our actions and inactions and our time in this mortal coil — "This particular assemblage of molecules and memories / Someday soon may just run out of gas."

Oldham goes sweetly romantic on "You Know the One," which describes the realization that you've found your significant other. It makes an uplifting pair with album closer "Building a Fire," where the relationship is further along and the symbiosis is significant.

Belying promotional photos showing Oldham operating some sort of motorized digger, "I Made a Place" is ideal for a raft, paddleboat or sailboat. Which-ever provides more time to reach your horizon.

— Pablo Gorondi  
Associated Press



## Simply Red

Blue Eyed Soul (BMG)

"Blue Eyed Soul," Simply Red's 12th album, is not innovative, groundbreaking, cutting-edge, topical or extensive. But it's a lot of fun, and its title is comickingly accurate.

Mick Hucknall's band, together in its current incarnation for more than 15 years, has been closely identified with soul and R&B since its 1985 debut "Picture Book." This album can be considered a sequel to

Hucknall's second solo record, "American Soul," a 2012 collection of covers.

While the music on the two records hits many of the same cues, the 10 new songs were all written by Hucknall and reflect how deeply the icons of the genre, from James Brown and Maurice White to Curtis Mayfield and Nile Rodgers, are ingrained in his craft.

Long after his wild years, Hucknall appears to be a model of domesticity and says he wrote songs he thought the rest of the band would "like to play night after night."

At the same time, Hucknall also provides himself a strong set of tunes to match his own talents. Recording the vocals mostly live "with one or two repairs" and placing them front and center makes them more noticeable freshness.

Clocking in at just over 33 minutes, the album fits comfortably on two sides of vinyl, though those opting for the CD get a slightly different running

order. If you want to experience it as Hucknall apparently intended, the strings drenched "Tonight" should be track five, making the Latin-tinged "Chula" the closer.

With the exception boogie-down leadoff track "Thinking of You," Hucknall's preferred order puts the slower songs at the start, including the moving "Complete Love."

The hot side starts with a sweet, repetitive bass line and horn accents that guide "Ring That Bell" into funky territory, while "BadBoots" features a Chic-like chink-chink rhythm guitar. "Don't Do Downs" clearly draws from the James Brown catalog.

"Blue Eyed Soul" is a return to basics and includes plenty of the band's typical suave vibrations. What's that slower, grayer notch are the grittier, lively sounds that Simply Red also excels at, when it wants.

— Pablo Gorondi  
Associated Press



## Various Artists

Queen &amp; Slim: The Soundtrack (Motown)

The trailer for upcoming film "Queen & Slim" packs a ton — intensity and beauty,

flashes of light and shadow and the strain of heaviness, too. In similar fashion, "Queen & Slim: The Soundtrack" comes bearing plenty of the same, with 16 songs expertly capturing the journey of the film's lead

characters as they go on the run following a traffic stop that ends in the shooting of a police officer.

"Queen & Slim" director Melina Matsoukas — who has won Grammys for directing music videos for Beyonce and Rihanna — and Emmy-winning writer Lena Waithe executive produced the soundtrack, along with Motown Records President Ethiopia Habtemariam. Together they're like the perfect auct DJ. They hit play, and they don't miss, with a perfect mix of pleasantly surprising old favorites — from Bilal to Mike Jones to Roy Ayers — and fresh new material, too.

There's the high-energy fun: Megan Thee Stallion's "Ride or Die," a New Orleans bounce music track featuring Vickeek-Lo, along with The-Dream's rocking "Cedes Benz" and the dance-worthy "My Money, My Baby" from Nigerian artist

Burna Boy.

Add to that mix a feel-good drop of mellow music: Syd's extra sexy "Getting Late," Moses Sumney's haunting "Doomed" and the sweet "Yo Love" from Vince Staples, 6lack and Morebba. The latter is an anthem perfectly suited for a Bonnie and Clyde love story.

Perhaps the crown jewel is a rare appearance from Ms. Lauryn Hill, whose new song "Guarding the Gates" is enough to bring a tear to her dearest fans' eyes. "Everybody, everybody wants to know / Where you going to / Cuz they wanna come, or so they think... until they find the cost of it." Hill testifies in her husky alto. "Till they find out, find out what you lost for it / And I'd do it all 'cuz I found love."

— Melanie J. Sims  
Associated Press



## DJ Shadow

Our Pathetic Age (Mass Appeal)

In the companion art piece to DJ Shadow's "Our Pathetic Age," a poem expresses not wanting to be permeated by the ubiquity of "tech paranoia." This sentiment hovers over the album's 23 tracks.

Split into two sides, an instrumental and vocal suite, Shadow addresses the contradiction of modernity, examining a lack of tangible connection in an age

where everything seems connected.

"Nature Always Wins" exemplifies this quandary. Belying its title, swaths of incandescent digital debris stream down like dying fireworks. The machines have claimed victory.

The electro excursions continue with "Slingblade," as wordless calls for aid and electronic flames signal peril. The throbbing machinations of

"Intersectionality" play like a hybrid of the soundtrack work from Oneohtrix Point Never and Zombi. "Juggernaut" mutates into an assault of drill 'n' bass.

The messes of menacing synths and walloping dubstep signifies an all-encompassing power. Exhibiting deft turntablism, Shadow deploys sinister spoken samples as directives to steer the malaise: "Sometimes you're so consumed by the music it could be saying death, and you would never know."

The comparative visceral realism as the rappers show up

is palpable. Heavy hitters like the guest list, telling tales of the grind from the periphery of human contact. Inspectah Deck is coming with that "White Walker style." Raekwon rocks galoshes, and his bodyguard is "a black Kevin Costner." The taut Dave East spot stands out, and Pusha T's "flows are being copied at Kinko's." Pharoahe Monch's smartphone is listening to him.

A dystopian air does pervade the record, but an underlying light often seeps through. Shadow's visionary production acts as the unifying factor. No Monsanto to the emcees, but the soundscapes overshadow.

Interlude "I Am Not a Robot" and social media exposé "C.O.N.F.O.R.M." clearly spell out the message. "Our Pathetic Age" aims to mirror the times and make sense of our present predicament.

— Jake O'Connell  
Associated Press



## WEEKEND: BOOKS



'Me'

Elton John

# Behind the music

In recent memoirs, musicians reveal glamorous tantrums, plenty of drug use and the double-edged sword of fame

By ALLISON STEWART  
Special to The Washington Post

The first time Elton John tried cocaine, he threw up. Looking back, he thinks, this should have been a sign. "It's hard to see how I could have been given a clearer warning unless it had started raining brimstone and I'd been visited by a plague of boils," writes John in his unsparing, extravagantly funny new memoir, "Me." Nevertheless, he kept at it, eventually losing 16 years of his life to addiction.

Because cocaine aggravated his existing anger issues, John spends a lot of "Me" yelling at people: He throws a glamorous tantrum on a private plane in front of Stevie Wonder. He screams at people because he doesn't like the weather. He is forever storming out of places, only to storm back in.

Even in his worst moments, John seems merely like a charming malcontent, thanks in no small part to journalist Alexis Petridis, whose work shaping the memoir's narrative voice is uncredited. Not since Keith Richards' memoir, "Life," has any rock legend seemed such good company.

"Me" traces John's pre-fame childhood in suburban London, his distant father and terrifying mother, and his early interest in rock 'n' roll, but doesn't linger. It's not long until he touches down in California, a 23-year-old virgin who will soon become the biggest pop star in the world.

John discovers he's gay, to no one's surprise but his own, and after ending an abusive relationship, embarks on a series of fast-burning love affairs that soon curdle into resentment and boredom. He marries a woman ("What if I'd only spent the last fourteen years sleeping with men because I hadn't found the right woman yet?"), unsuccessfully.

As in most rock star memoirs, the fame years are the best years. John is an energetic collector of celebrity friends, and "Me" doesn't stint on detail. John Lennon is a beloved friend and drug buddy. Queen Elizabeth slaps a viscount. Sylvester Stallone and Richard Gere come to blows over the affections of Princess Diana. Freddie Mercury and Michael Jackson argue over a llama.

He is benevolent toward almost everyone, except for his mother, who is glowering and unkind, and Tina Turner, an imperious she-devil who tells him he looks fat in Versace, which is possibly the worst thing you can say to Elton John.

John eventually meets young AIDS patient Ryan White, who inspires his advocacy work and pierces his veil of self-pity and privilege. He gets sober, survives prostate cancer and meets and marries David Furnish; the couple has two sons.

"Me" feels bracingly honest, which it must. Because readers bond to their memoirists like hostages to their captors, trust is essential.

## 'Hurricanes'

Rick Ross

In his new memoir, "Hurricanes," rapper, drug boss and label head Rick Ross plays with the idea of an unreliable narrator, with mixed results. Growing up in southern Florida during the '80s cocaine boom, Ross got close enough to the hustlers in his neighborhood to realize the straight and narrow held little appeal. He left college to pursue music, and after 10 years of struggle and mid-level drug dealing, landed three No. 1 albums in a row. He established a record label, Maybach Music Group, then bought several Wingstop fast-food franchises and Evander Holyfield's palatial Georgia estate.

His career was almost derailed by his persistent seizures (likely caused by exhaustion, and his love of cocaine), and by the revelation that he briefly spent time as a correctional officer in a Florida prison, a fact he omits until more than halfway through what is an otherwise chronological book.

"Hurricanes" is a straightforward, conventional memoir, until it isn't. In the book's last pages, Ross hints that there are larger forces behind his success, or at least behind his fortune, that he isn't at liberty to discuss. He asks: How is he, the survivor of so many murder attempts, able to move through the world without fear? How can he afford the Holyfield estate, with its wallet-melting upkeep and stable of horses, when he's only had one platinum album? ("Do you have any idea how much it costs to take care of four horses?") Something is fueling his extravagant lifestyle, Ross hints, broadly, and it isn't being a Wingstop franchisee. It's a strange non-revelation that casts the rest of the book into question. Whatever he's withholding, even Ross seems to acknowledge it's too big a thing to leave out. "I can't tell you," he writes. "Forgive me for that."



## 'Horror Stories'

Liz Phair

Frankness is Liz Phair's brand. Her 1993 breakthrough album, the brilliant and profane "Exile in Guyville," chronicled her post-college experiences in Chicago's male-dominated music scene. Phair's new memoir, "Horror Stories," makes little mention of the album, or of her artistic life (likely the subject of a separate book), though it examines the repercussions of the fame "Guyville" wrought.

Less a linear memoir than a series of episodic reminiscences stretching from her childhood to the present day, "Horror Stories" is harrowing and deft. It's a catalog of things Phair wishes she had done differently: the drunk girl in the bathroom she didn't help, the wrenching relationship with an ex who was probably a sociopath, if she had to guess; the man on the bus leveled by her disdain; the affair that ended her marriage. "We hurt our spouses, our kids, our reputations, for nothing," Phair writes of the latter. "Empty lust: a cardinal sin."

In one chapter, she struggles with an unnamed producer who sounds a lot like Ryan Adams. He hits on Phair, who declines his advances, though she worries he'll lose interest in finishing her album if she doesn't sleep with him. "I suspected from the way he blew hot and cold that without that extra kick of excitement, that frisson, his own interest in the project wouldn't last." This is mostly what happens.

There's a moment in every celebrity memoir when the celebrity realizes that fame has become a trap, a gilded bubble from which they must escape, although nobody ever actually does. Phair blames success for her loneliness and self-centeredness, but it's too appealing to give up.



For John and Ross, fame protects, providing bodyguards and layers of staff. But Phair is half in and half out, famous enough to draw celebrity stalkers and feel isolated from her friends, but not famous enough to be able to retreat behind mansion gates. While John is so cocooned that washing machines have to be explained to him, Phair pushes her own cart at Trader Joe's, firing with the cashier to bolster her flagging self-esteem.

John might argue that she has the better end of the deal. The farther you get from the person you originally were, he writes, the unhappier you'll be. Fame corrodes. "It's a grotesque, soul-destroying environment to live in," he writes. "And you've created it yourself."

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION &amp; DVD

## NEW ON DVD

**"Angel Has Fallen":** Gerald Butler returns as the "Has Fallen" franchise's Secret Service agent Mike Banning, the action hero with a penchant for stabbing people. In this installment, Mike is forced to go rogue (surprise!) after being framed in an attack on the president. But 'Angel' commands a more serious tone than "Olympus Has Fallen" and "London Has Fallen," *Tribune* News Service critic Katie Walsh wrote in her review.

"The tone of 'Angel' is far more somber than the wise-cracking 'Olympus' or the frothing, jingoistic 'London,'" Walsh wrote. "The weight makes the film strangely dull at times. (How can a scene of Butler crashing a big rig into a tree be so flat?) But some



Simon Varsano

**Gerald Butler again plays Secret Service agent Mike Banning in "Angel Has Fallen."**

moments in this outside take on the 'The Fugitive' hit a real nerve, such as a shootout in an office building where young bearded white men in tactical gear pump thousands of rounds into drywall and office furniture. Banning is our fantasy for those very real scenarios: a strong, resourceful, yet exceedingly normal man of action."

Butler in gruff mode, chaotic action sequences and a script that actually addresses all those head injuries Mike has gotten throughout the franchise — what's not to love.

**"Official Secrets":** A new whistleblower may be dominating the headlines, but the story of Katharine Gun, less known in the U.S. than in Britain, is a must-see. In 2003, Gun, a British intelligence agency translator, leaked a classified memo from the American government announcing an illegal operation to blackmail UN diplomats to support invading Iraq. The film follows Gun (Keira Knightley) and her life with her husband, Yasar (Adam Bakri), a Kurdish Turk attempting to get British citizenship, her whistleblowing and the ensuing trial. "A model of professionalism and integrity," *'Official Secrets'* moves along in a brisk clip," wrote the *Los Angeles Times'* Kenneth Turan in his review. "It's paced like a police procedural, but it focuses not on an investigator but rather a moral exemplar who takes a principled stand in defiance of the price that has to be paid."

"Already twice nominated for an Oscar, Knightley gives one of her strongest performances here, using her innate steeliness and presence to create a convincing portrait of a courageous zealot who believes in right and wrong in an almost biblical sense."

Also available on DVD: **"Bernadette":** Cate Blanchett stars in this adaptation of the best-selling novel by Maria Semple, which follows the aftermath of a former Seattle architect's disappearance.

**"Don't Let Go":** Detective Jack Radcliff (David Oyelowo) receives a shocking call from his niece Ashley (Storm Reid), who has been recently murdered, and must solve the crime in this time-traveling thriller.

**"Mary":** A family buys a ship with scary secrets that come to light once they are out on isolated waters. Gary Oldman and Emily Mortimer star.

**"The Driver":** A detective (Bruce Dern) sets his sights on catching a free-wheeling, criminally in-demand driver (Ryan O'Neal).

— Katie Foran-McHale/TNS

BY YVONNE VILLARREAL  
*Los Angeles Times*

**"Mixed-ish,"** which premiered this fall, is the second series spun off from ABC's popular sitcom "black-ish" — joining Freeform's coming-of-age comedy "grown-ish."

And if "Mixed-ish" showrunner Karin Gist has her way, the show will provoke conversation. The '80s-set prequel follows a teenage Rainbow Johnson — the character popularized by Tracee Ellis Ross in "black-ish," played here by Arica Himmel — and the experiences of her mixed-race family when they transition from a commune to mainstream living. The show, like its predecessor, has delved into some complex material involving racial identity — the handling of which has garnered both praise and criticism.

"We are very, very clear that there is no version of making everyone happy, nor is that our intent," Gist said on a recent afternoon. "We just want to make it feel right and honest for the show, and for our characters, and reflect the world as best we can."

The freshman comedy, which was recently granted a full-season order, is the second series Gist has guided as showrunner. She previously headed Fox's short-lived girl-group melodrama "Star." Gist, a former family law attorney, shoved her foot in the Hollywood door after attending a taping of UPN's "Girlfriends." She had been developing her writing, even enrolling in a boot camp at Santa Monica's Bergamot Station Arts Center. While leaving the taping, Gist introduced herself to one of the writers on the show, Bernadette Lockett, with the help of the audience warm-up comedian.

"[Bernadette] talked to me and gave me a list of books to read and gave me her number and tore it off that night's script that she had in her hand," Gist recalled. "I took it and put it in my Rolodex back at the law firm, and then I started writing."

Gist wrote a "Will & Grace" spec script, and after Gist revised it with notes from Lockett, the script made its way to "Girlfriends" showrunner Mara Brock Akil. Gist was eventually hired in Season 5 and would go on to work on such shows as "One Tree Hill," "House of Lies" and "Grey's Anatomy."

Sitting on the terrace of her Los Feliz, Calif., home, Gist talked about tackling race and identity on a broadcast comedy, creating opportunities for others and where things stand with the "Sister 3" script she had in development with Disney+. These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

### 'There is a trust level'

We are trying to have a show about identity and inclusion. It's about Rainbow and her African American mother and white father, so there's conversations about race around that. But at the end of the day, we want everyone to watch it who feels othered or marginalized and see a little girl struggling to find her voice and find her space and step out on faith, because I think that's a universal story.

The goal is to have people come to the show and watch the stories and see themselves in that. The arc of the show is to be a place for everybody to connect.

People really responded to the hair episode and the "What is blackness?" episode, which came right after it. We got a lot of responses from our Halloween episode, where we were talking about tokenism. And even the Christmas episode — I just got to talk a little bit about spirituality and religion. What you believe and how you believe, and how you deal with

Karin Gist, creator and showrunner of "Mixed-ish," at her home in Los Feliz, Calif.

IRFAN KHAN, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS



## 'Mixed-ish' results

Showrunner explains why inclusion is still hard to achieve in Hollywood

family and holidays. We're really talking about some things that our audiences might not see on TV all the time.

I think there is a trust level [with the network] because of what "black-ish" did. That it kind of trailblazed a way. We're also still under the "ish" brand, so we have that protective cover, so to speak. When we push the envelope or have conversations about things that may be a little scary, it's like, "Well, Mom did it," you know? "They did it over there."

### 'Part of the conversation'

I want to be able to have the stuff that I work on or write be a part of the conversation. I think it's important to have people walk away from something and think about the world, or at least I hope to have challenged the way they think or have a conversation with somebody else about it. That's what was so amazing about "Star" for me, because it had the elements of these amazing women searching for their dream. ... "Star" had all of that stuff, but then it had the ability to say something and challenge things and not be preachy about it and just put a lens on another experience. That is really important. I think. For people now to turn on the TV and see not just their color, but their experience, on TV.

### 'Inclusion hurdles'

My first year on "Star," I was looking to bring up women. I felt like, "I have a seat at the table; I can bring people along." One of the writers that I really fought for was [a production assistant] on "House of Lies," and there was a little pushback and I said, "No, I wanted to bring her in." Having a diverse room is

really important ... especially on shows where the goal is to challenge or have a conversation about social things, then you need lots of different points of view. So I think it's important, not just in the room, but on the crew, and to pull people up and make sure that there are people behind me.

It is hard. There's not a lot of outward resistance, but there are things that are hurdles. Experience, for example — if you're trying to pull someone up but nobody has given them a chance. And then it's like, "Of course, we'd be open to a different type of person," but then nobody has the experience. ...

That is what I find most frustrating about the industry — the inclusion hurdles. Because, other than that, I have been blessed. But I don't want that to feel like a blessing. I want it to be that people who have something to say and talent are given opportunity to share it.

### 'Sister Act' sequel

Regina Hicks [a co-executive producer on "Insecure" and I have turned in a rewrite [on the "Sister Act 3" script] and I feel really good about it. It's such a great franchise, and again, it's about a woman discovering herself. So the idea of revisiting that character, who is obviously an older person now, and what's really happening for her, and you know, like an older singer in Vegas, and what does that really look like? Especially if there are these younger singers coming up.

So it's a really relatable story — people stepping into their own and finding their voice. No matter who you are and what you do, you're always trying to step out and say, "This is who I am."

# WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

## Wash your hands. Often.

The secret to staying healthy during the holidays is no secret at all: Wash your hands. It's the most important thing you can do while traveling, and it's good form year-round, but particularly important in the winter.

"Our hands are the interface between ourselves and the rest of the world," says Gina Suh, a specialist in infectious diseases at the Mayo Clinic. "In other words, our hands touch all these surfaces that are full of germs, and then we touch our own face and mucosal surfaces — such as our mouth, nose, eyes — way more than you would even notice. Most people touch their face many times in any given minute, and that can transmit illness."

Suh recommends using good old-fashioned soap and water from a sink to properly wash, scrubbing for a full 20 seconds. Wash before and after you eat, after using the restroom, and maybe even right now. It's that helpful.

"I can't stress the importance of hand hygiene enough," Suh says. It's "probably the biggest thing you can do to help prevent illness."

Don't have access to a sink or soap and water? Keep hand sanitizer with you as backup. (But more on this below.)

## Manage your stress

It's a stressful time of year, whether the source of anxiety is holiday-related or otherwise. To add insult to injury, that stress can be a detriment to your health. Suh says stress is one of the main reasons people get sick this time of year.

Sometimes it may not be the stress itself that's a problem, but how it affects the rest of your life. For example, facing stress can lead to eating indulgently at the expense of a healthy diet.

"People may be less apt to eating fresh fruits and vegetables during the holidays and may be eating more fatty foods, meats, carbohydrates, sweets and other foods," she says.

As you gear up for holiday travel, keep self-care in mind.

"Anytime that there's changes in your schedule for the holiday season, your own self-care can suffer," says Christa Schmitz, a nurse practitioner and director of nurse education for Passport Health travel clinics. "Anytime that you start neglecting your own self-care, whether it's with sleep, diet or exercise, then you're potentially not your best self. And so you could become more susceptible" to illness. Schmitz recommends sticking to the schedule you're used to through the busyness of the season and even deliberately carving out more time for yourself. The better shape you're in before you get on a plane, the better your chances are for avoiding a bug.

## Get your shots

Flu season is at its peak over the holidays, so don't get on the plane without being up to date on all of your essential vaccines.

"We're right in the midst of flu season. When you're traveling ... with other people on planes who have coughs and flu-like symptoms, you risk having an exposure," Schmitz says.

Then there are the measles, which you absolutely do not want to get or spread.



ILLUSTRATION BY  
NOGA AMI-RAV  
Stars and Stripes

## Advice on how to stay healthy as you travel during the holiday season

BY NATALIE B. COMPTON  
The Washington Post

**I**t's cold and flu season. You know that because it seems like just about everyone is sick. Your office is cut in half. The receptionist at your dentist's office is sick. Your mom just called, and she's sick, too. While the entirety of the planet seems to be battling nasal drip, there's another problem. The holiday travel season is upon us, meaning all of that sneezing, coughing and aching will be boarding a plane with you.

Here's what medical professionals advise to dodge your seatmates' illness.

"Right now, measles have been an issue both globally and nationally throughout the United States," she says. "So it's a good idea that people are up to date on their childhood vaccines, which would include the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, along with the annual flu vaccine."

## Consider a travel clinic

Not up to date on immunizations?

Traveling to another country? You might want to go to a travel clinic before your trip.

"If you're planning on traveling internationally, there may be country-specific or region-specific precautions to help you with in a travel clinic setting," Suh says. "There, you can have a tailored discussion, according to your itinerary, about what specific things to look for and what specific vaccinations or medications may be recommended."

Schmitz notes that certain illnesses are seasonal and perhaps not on the timeline you're used to. Consulting with a travel health practitioner can prepare you better.

## Drink lots of water

Suh says people are more dehydrated over the holidays. Couple that with an airplane's dehydrating conditions and you're looking at a parched body. You don't necessarily need to chug gallons of water, but you should be more mindful of your intake.

"I don't think you should overdo it, because then that could be problematic," Suh says. "I think that the problem is people fall behind in their hydration. They forget about it. So try to maintain normal or slightly above-normal levels of hydration."

Instead of relying on the flight attendant's beverage distribution schedule on the plane, pack a reusable water bottle and fill it up before you board to give yourself the control.

## Be well rested for your flight

Sleeping enough isn't only helpful for waking up in time for your flight or being in a better mood at the airport. Should your holiday travel plans include early call times, plan to get adequate sleep beforehand for your health, too. It might sound like common sense, but it becomes even more necessary when you're hoping to ward off that cold everyone seems to have.

"Get adequate sleep. It's so important to your overall health and immune system," says Schmitz, the nurse practitioner.

## Sanitizing can't hurt

Although celebrities may go viral for taking in-flight sanitation to the extreme, Suh says antibacterial wipes and face masks offer only marginal benefits. She wouldn't recommend wiping down common areas or your seat as a more potent solution than washing your hands. The same goes for wearing a face mask as a barrier against germs.

"You're not getting the same levels of protection as simple hand-washing," she says. "I don't see it as downside, except I can't imagine it being very comfortable for the person who's wearing the mask. But I'm unclear about how exactly how much benefit there would be."

Traveling over the holidays can feel like a necessary evil, particularly when you're surrounded by chaos, and that chaos seems to have a cold. Among it all, keep calm and wash your hands.



## WEEKEND: FAMILY



ILLUSTRATION BY NODA AHI-RAW/Stars and Stripes

# Meeting the parents

## What to do when family, friends don't like your partner

BY ALISON BOWEN  
Chicago Tribune

**W**hen Shirley Baldwin Owens prepared to meet her future in-laws for the first time, she knew they did not like her.

She had been divorced three times. She was living with their son. She knew she wasn't a conservative enough match.

Before that first meeting, she said, "They refused to talk to me."

The family now gets along, after the initial cold front. But the road there wasn't easy, and it's one many people have experienced.

Chicago-based therapist Robynne Howard often encounters this issue with couples seeking premarital counseling.

"It's not infrequent that a couple enters therapy because the family isn't accepting of their fiancé, maybe because of racial differences, culture differences, ethnicity, faith, socioeconomic status and even educational attainment," Howard said.

This situation can be tricky for everyone involved. Experts shared the following advice on creating communication and family cohesion when possible.

### First, find out the issue

All kinds of reasons might be behind why family or friends do not initially like or get along with a significant other.

Perhaps the beginning of the relationship was rocky, and that's what people remember.

"They're not really tracking the way the relationship improved," said Elizabeth Sloan, a marriage and family therapist in Maryland. "First impressions can actually follow the fiancé around, and that can be really hard to correct, especially when there isn't a lot of time to get to know the fiancé."

When families live in different areas, fewer encounters can make it

difficult for all parties to get to know each other.

Sometimes, resistance might have nothing to do with your partner in the first place. Perhaps people bonded with an ex or had something different in mind.

"The fiancé may be perfectly fine, but the other friends and family aren't ready for a new person," Sloan said. "Maybe they had their hearts set on a different mate."

The therapists do caution that some concerns warrant a conversation, for example, issues like alcohol abuse or disrespect toward women. In these cases, Sloan said, "I think it is a good idea for someone to say to their friend, 'Have you thought about what would happen if this got worse?' Or, 'Have you ever been bothered by it?' And not sort of rendering your own judgment, just holding your own judgment, but asking your friend gently."

### Ask each other to help

What can each partner do to be helpful in this situation? Marriage is about being a united front. These issues will only become more complicated as couples eventually navigate holiday plans and, potentially, children.

Speak from a place of "I feel," not, "You do," Howard suggested. "Softening it and really think about what you want from the conversation and what's going to really help them to be more empathetic and to understand what it's like to be you."

Are there specific topics that cause friction, like different political leanings? If so, Sloan suggests asking a partner, "If the topic comes up, can you diplomatically and tactfully just change the subject or make a joke?"

And a fiancé needs to feel like his partner is standing up for him, Sloan said.

In Owens' case, she wanted to feel like her future husband was not focusing on the negative — defending her against issues his family might

have — but instead explaining why he loved her.

### Be firm with friends, family

Kate Rose, author of "You Only Fall in Love Three Times: The Secret Search for Our Twin Flame," said this situation requires navigating a family who loves you but might be wrestling with different expectations. Consider that you might need to stop seeking their approval.

"It's not that we want to alienate our family," she said. "It's all about boundaries."

Tell relatives or friends, "My relationship with you has nothing to do with my relationship with the person that I'm with." Be clear that you love this person, who will be part of your life. "And then that's it," Rose added. "Eventually they will either deal with it, or there will be a new normal."

### Don't isolate yourself, and don't give up

Continue to create situations where all parties can spend time together. Steer conversations toward topics that will build bridges. Praise your partner in front of the others.

Owens said she did not try to change her personality. She tried to understand where people were coming from and see their perspective, but mostly, she tried to be patient.

"I didn't allow myself to feel harsh toward them or upset with them," she said.

Eventually, her mother-in-law, Joanna Owens, grew to appreciate the steadiness her future daughter-in-law showed. And, she noticed her son's happiness.

"That is a priceless thing for a mama to see," Joanna Owens said.

She is glad, she said, that she finally gave her daughter-in-law a chance. Her advice for others in a similar situation: "Go in with an open heart, and let people be who they are."

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## A military spouse's Thanksgiving prayer

**N**ow I lay me down to pray,  
that I'll survive Thanksgiving Day.  
That the special dinner I agreed to host,  
won't make me a laughingstock on paste.

That I will keep hold of my sanity,  
and have no outbursts of profanity.

That our turkey will completely thaw,  
so that stuffing her won't require a hacksaw.

That the kids will happily play a game,  
and won't bellyache that the Macy's Parade is "lame."

That hubby will assist when the moment is opportune,  
and not go off with buddies to drink beer before noon.

That if guys must play football so they feel athletic,  
no one will get tackled and require a paramedic.

That the turkey will fry to a nice golden brown,  
without a conflagration that burns the base down.

That the beans will steam, the potatoes will boil,  
and the gravy won't resemble a patch of crude oil.

That our friends won't mind if cranberries are canned,  
and if the smoke detector goes off, they'll understand.

That everyone will gather at our table without haste,  
before the mashed potatoes become wallpaper paste.

That the children will remember to put napkins on laps,  
chew with mouths closed, and not feed the dog scraps.

That no one will giggle when we say the blessing,  
and also won't grimace at the neighbor's vegan dressing.

That while carving the turkey, a wishbone we'll find,  
not the sack of giblets that got left behind.

That dinner conversation will be without drama,  
and no one will bring up Trump or Obama.

That around our table, stories will be told,  
about experiences we've had, both young and old.

About patriotism, honor, joy and strife;  
about the laughter, wisdom and strength in military life.

That sharing our stories will help us to see,  
that our sacrifices make America the home of the free.

And before we get too sentimental with tears in our eyes,  
someone will remind us that we haven't yet had pie.

That dessert won't send me on a guilt trip;  
even storebought pie tastes good with enough Cool Whip.

That after dinner everyone will help clear the grub,  
so I'm not left with a sinkful of dishes to scrub.

That while watching football, my husband will squelch his manly urges to tich, scratch and belch.

And if the quarterback fumbles, he'll turn a blind eye,  
rather than throw the remote and let expletives fly.

That our friends won't linger because they've had too much booze,  
or lie on our couch and take a long snooze.

Gathering with military friends was surely long overdue,  
but they'll politely take the clue and bid us adieu.

That they'll head on home with just coats and umbrellas,  
and not any symptoms of acute salmonella.

That we'll have a quiet moment to let triptophan digest,  
and agree that the day was one of the best.

And if we happen to go in for round two of the pie,  
that we'll have Pepto Bismol in our supply.

Now, as I lay my head down to rest,  
I pray Thanksgiving Day will be blessed without stress!

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at:  
themeatandpotatoesoflife.com  
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### DOUBLE SIXES

BY PETER GORDON / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Peter Gordon, of Great Neck, N.Y., is a professional puzzlemaker and editor. He oversees the puzzle-end-game program at Sterling Publishing. He also creates a challenging weekly online crossword ("Fireball"), available by subscription. This is Peter's 116th puzzle for The Times, including the very first crossword (a Sunday) under my editorship in 1993. — W.S.

- ACROSS

1 "Hooked on Classics" company

5 Christina of "Monster"

10 Skins, so to speak

15 Silent

18 Last Supper item

20 Case study in many business ethics classes

21 Call on

22 "The Simpsons" character who holds a Ph.D. in computer science

23 Low singers, short on money, draw idly

26 Place for a beer pump

27 Reaches a climax

28 High-class person?

29 Served in a certain cream sauce

31 Fleet runner: Abbr.

32 Boston's Liberty Tree, e.g.

34 Tennis player with a record 377 cumulative weeks ranked No. 1

36 First-rate

37 Works as an accountant for a Swedish aerospace company

44 "Pearly Shells" singer

45 Like a llano

46 Put a stop to

49 Mlle., across the Pyrénées

50 Tangle

51 Airy areas of hotels

52 Urban intersectors: Abbr.
- DOWN

33 People who share an apartment with a Jordanian royal

58 Rival of Havinine

61 Picnic, say

62 1980s auto imports based on the Fiat

63 Turkish coin

64 Speed skater who won five golds at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics

66 Not off

69 Politico Liz

71 Unusual

72 Pocahontas's husband John

73 50,000-watt clear-channel radio station in Iowa for which Ronald Reagan was once a sportscaster

74 Sends to the canvas, for short

75 Designer Mizrahi shouts like a cowboy in a nonchalant way

82 Citi Field player

83 Listens attentively

84 Man's name that becomes another man's name when a "C" is put in front

85 Life \_\_\_\_ (timesaving trick)

89 Events for special customers

91 Smooth and lustrous

93 Asian metropolis of 28+ million

94 Headline after an adolescent at a pool competition is made fun of

97 Moghul emperor of India known as "the Great"

99 Nephew of Cain

100 Feminine side

101 Bit

102 Meteorological phenomenon

105 Mourning person, perhaps

109 Like triangles governed by the Pythagorean theorem

111 Stir

112 Matriculated students appear to be timid

116 Couldn't stand?

117 John who invented a steel plow

118 Poles, e.g.

119 California mission founder Junipero

120 What's up?

121 More logical

122 Brownish gray

123 Fit together like matryoshka dolls
- 9 Plants that yield a blue dye

10 Antonin who composed "Carnival Overture"

11 Host of the Olympics where golf returned after a 112-year hiatus

12 National School Lunch Program org.

13 Pepper dispenser

14 Cinematographic innovation of the 1970s

15 Raising Cain

16 Overture

17 Unpleasantly humid

19 Thus

24 Mallorca o Menorca, per ejemplo

25 Socially awkward

30 Hearst-like film character

31 Interjects

33 It's more attractive the closer you are to it

35 Adorn

38 N.B.A. nickname until 2011

39 Something white rice lacks

40 Hay there!

41 Where the Nobel Peace Prize winner is announced

42 Money for a grand tour

43 Stiffly formal

47 Like binocular audio

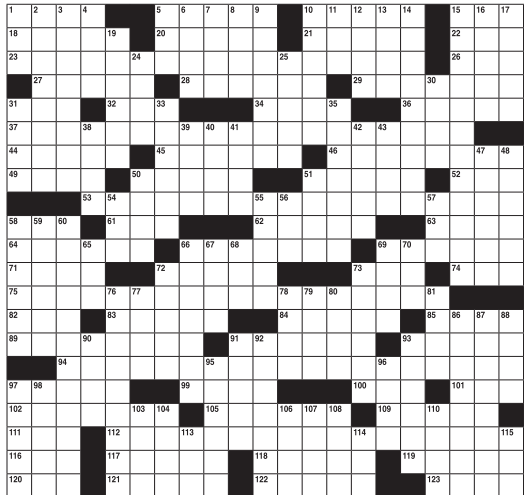
48 Parts of college applications

50 Bean on the silver screen

51 Ship of mythology

54 Pac-12 player

55 Cry of dismay



- 56 Bemoan

57 Hoppy drink

58 Food item often prepared with lemon and garlic

59 Promo

60 Snack-food brand that sounds like buried treasure

61 It may be a deal breaker: Abbr.

66 Gender

67 Some pipe joints

68 New York Titans' org. of old

69 Jackie of "Rush Hour"

70 Question that isn't a "wh-" question

72 Ned who composed "Air Music"

73 Sound heard at Churchill Downs

77 Quiet

78 The College School, today

79 Easter Sommer

80 50-50

81 Molt

86 Not out to lunch

87 Crib users

88 Captain played twice in film by Charles Laughton

90 Equine: horse :: cygnet: \_\_\_\_

91 Pub perch

92 "That's what you should do"

93 Jeans

95 Playwright Eve

96 Land on the Celtic Sea

97 Run up

98 Company that's had its moments

103 Draft classification

104 Small songbird

106 Composer Bartók

107 Biblical birthright seller

108 Send one's regrets, say

110 F.B.I. guys

113 Underground band

114 Direction from Belg. to Bulg.

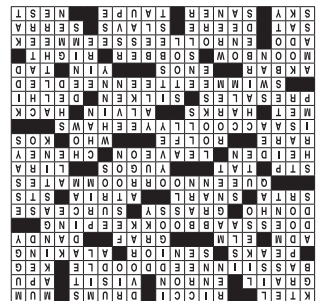
115 "Krazy \_\_\_\_"

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## FACES



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

**Tanya Tucker, shown Aug. 20, received four Grammy nominations Wednesday for her first album of new songs in 17 years, which she released in August.**

## Tanya Tucker surprised by Grammy nom

By KRISTIN M. HALL  
Associated Press

The first time Tanya Tucker was nominated for a Grammy Award, it was 1972, it was for her breakout country hit, "Delta Dawn," and she was just a teen. Now more than 45 years later, Tucker finds herself nominated for four Grammys, including song of the year for "Bring My Flowers Now," competing against the likes of Lady Gaga and Taylor Swift.

"I'm beyond shocked. I'm very, very surprised," Tucker told The Associated Press on Wednesday morning after the nominations were announced. She was also nominated for best country album for "While I'm Livin'," best country solo performance and best country song for "Bring My Flowers Now."

Although some might call her first album of new material in 17 years and her first Grammy nominations since 1993 a comeback, Tucker prefers to call the recognition "a start."

"I'm very grateful that I could represent the music that brought me to the dance, the country music I was raised on," Tucker said. "But it's a start for me to do a lot of other kinds of music, and that's what I've been wanting to do."

The aptly titled song was co-written by her producer, Grammy-winner Brandi Carlile, along with Phil and Tim Hanseroth. The tune has Tucker reflecting on the long shadow of the miles she's traveled, and the regrets and joys of a life well lived. The album was also produced by Shooter Jennings.

"I remember my dad telling me, maybe even before I got started, he told me, 'Tanya, the biggest song you're gonna have is the one you write yourself,'" Tucker said. "And here it is. It's happened."

Tucker now has 14 nominations over her career, but no wins. Now 61, Tucker said she's ready for a win.

"I hope we get lucky this time," Tucker said. "If I don't, I'm still a winner. I already won. I'm still here. So I win."



## 'A horror story that has to be told'

### Ruffalo a lawyer who takes on DuPont in 'Dark Waters'

By LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

**M**ark Ruffalo learned about corporate attorney Rob Bilott, who for 20 years battled DuPont to expose the harmful effects of the chemical PFOA, along with most of the country: In 2016 through an article in The New York Times Magazine.

A cold call from a West Virginia farmer in 1998 who believed his creek was being contaminated and his animals poisoned by DuPont runoffs began the long investigation that ended in 2017 when DuPont and Chemours Co. agreed to pay more than \$600 million in a class-action lawsuit on behalf of thousands.

Ruffalo was captivated and immediately set out to acquire the rights to make Nathaniel Rich's "The Lawyer Who Became DuPont's Worst Nightmare" into a legal thriller in which he'd play Bilott.

"It's a horror story that has to be told," Ruffalo said. "It's a story for our time."

The result is "Dark Waters," directed by Todd Haynes and co-starring an impressive ensemble including Anne Hathaway, Tim Robbins, Bill Camp, William Jackson Harper and Bill Pullman. The film opened Thursday in stateside theaters. Bilott also authored a book about the ordeal, "Exposure," which hit shelves in October.

DuPont said in a statement that it believes the film "misrepresents things that happened years ago, including our history, our values and science." The company also said it supports regulating the chemicals spotlighted in "Dark Waters."

Ruffalo spoke to The Associated Press about the film.

**AP: Was it difficult to get the rights?**

**Ruffalo:** I was in the process of acquiring the rights after reading (the article) and I got a call from my friends at Participant Media who said, "Hey I think we're actually bidding against each other for this story. We love it. Would you like to join forces with us?" I'd done "Spotlight" with them and I was like, "I would like that." And then we started to develop it ... This thing happened in record time. (It usually) takes 5-7 years to get a movie made.

**Why did you think of Todd Haynes to direct?**

We'd been bumping into each other for years and I'd been such a big fan of his. I thought he would do something really beautiful with this.

**Actor Mark Ruffalo, photographed Nov. 13 at the Whittby Hotel in New York, stars as Rob Bilott, a corporate attorney who takes on the DuPont chemical company in "Dark Waters."**

SCOTT GRIES, INVISION/AP

## Grandma steals the show in Musgraves' Christmas special

Grammy winner Kacey Musgraves knows who the real star is in her family — her grandmother. That's why the singer put the woman she calls Nana in her upcoming holiday special, "The Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show."

"Basically, this is just Nana's world. We're just all livin' in it. This is Nana's Christmas special ... I'm just in it," said Musgraves on Tuesday at a screening in New York.

Musgraves initially worried how her grandmother would handle being on camera, but those fears quickly subsided.

"I was like, 'OK, this is my 80-something-year-old grandmother. Is she gonna come in like, forget the lines?' Like, you know. She's not used to this," Musgraves said. "She came in, she gave us ad-libs, she was, like, giving us different inflections like she knew what to do. It was really cute."

"The Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show" debuts Nov. 29 on Amazon Prime Video. The special features a number of celebrities, including Fred Armisen, Camila Cabello, James Corden and Kendall Jenner.

Musgraves got the idea for the special a year ago. Filming took place over the summer in California.

"It was like, 90 degrees in L.A. in this airplane hangar that we shot it in; it didn't have air conditioning. So, I was wearing Christmas clothing, on my feet for like 16 hours a day, like, just tryin' to make Christmas happen. And I think we did," Musgraves said.

## Apple cancels premiere of 'The Banker'

Apple has canceled the premiere of one of the tech company's first original films, "The Banker," the day before it was to debut at Los Angeles' AFI Film Festival.

In a statement Wednesday, Apple said that last week it learned of "some concerns" surrounding "The Banker" and needs "some time to look into these matters."

The head-on-a-trail story film stars Samuel L. Jackson and Anthony Mackie. Mackie plays Bernard Garrett who in the 1950s and '60s recruited a white man to pose as the face of his expansive real estate and banking business. In 1968, Garrett was convicted of misusing bank funds.

A theatrical release is scheduled for Dec. 6, after which it would be a part of the company's new streaming service.

## Other news

■ **Holly Hunter** will star opposite Ted Danson in an upcoming unnamed NBC comedy set in the world of local politics. The network said Wednesday that Hunter will play a liberal Los Angeles city councilwoman in the series from "30 Rock" writer-producers Tina Fey and Robert Carlock. An air date for the untitled series wasn't announced.

From The Associated Press



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Ernie Gates

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## OPINION

## Who can speak for Ukraine like McCain?

By PATRICIA MURPHY  
CQ Roll Call

If there was ever a time and a place where the voice of John McCain was missing from Congress, this is it—at the intersection of an impeachment, an election and a constitutional crisis.

The late Arizona Republican was one of the few members famously ready and willing to stand on a political island if he thought it was the right thing to do. So it's easy to imagine him waiting in the well of the Senate to flash a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down on the fate of President Donald Trump, with cable pundits everywhere holding their breath until he did.

But more importantly, McCain was also the foremost expert and advocate in Congress for Ukraine, the country that served as the backdrop for the events that have led Trump to the doorstep of his own impeachment. Why is that important? Because there's no way that Rudy Giuliani could have marauded so freely in Ukraine or that Trump could have pulled the ambassador in Kyiv with less than two hours' notice or that the U.S. Military, and Judge and Mick Mulvaney could have withheld vital aid for Ukrainian troops as he did without the senator from Arizona making it known to the world. Loudly.

To understand how important McCain was in Ukraine before he died, you only need to know that there are multiple roads in the country named "John McCain Street," including one in Kyiv (voted by its City Council). Another is in Krymske, a small town on the front lines of the war against Russia. Lacking the resources for a new street sign, Nolan Peterson from the Daily Signal described a day in Krymske in 2015 when a Ukrainian newspaper printed-out sheet of paper with McCain's picture on it to a power pole next to the road to make it official.

By RANDY REESE  
Special to Stars and Stripes

Fifty years ago, 21-year-old Army infantryman James Joyner was on patrol in Vietnam's Mekong Delta when he stepped on a land mine, losing both of his legs and one arm, forever changing his life. With resilience and determination, Dennis was able to recover and build a meaningful life, with a loving family and a successful career, but he didn't do it alone.

For the past 38 years, Dennis' wife, Donna, has been by his side, supporting and caring for him, a role that has become a full-time job as his condition worsened. Today he relies on Donna more than ever, but it becomes increasingly difficult for both of them as they grow older. Donna worries whether she will be able to continue giving Dennis the care he needs without support. Dennis worries about how she will manage once he is gone, since Donna long ago gave up her career to care for him.

Recognizing the challenges family caregivers face, as well as the valuable service they provide to seriously disabled veterans, Congress in 2010 passed historic legislation to provide comprehensive caregiver support to seriously injured veterans and their caregivers. The law provided caregivers of severely injured veterans a higher level of benefits and assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including training, case management, health insurance and a modest stipend. Enactment of the comprehensive caregiver program was recognition of the increasingly critical role family caregivers play in the recovery of severely injured veterans. Moreover, fam-

When McCain died in 2018, the editor of the Kyiv Post described him as beloved in a country in search of champions and heroes: "When Ukraine faced some of its darkest and most dangerous times, it was often not the voice of a Ukrainian politician who lifted the spirits of the nation. It was the voice of U.S. Sen. John McCain."

A fierce advocate, McCain's commitment to Ukraine was equally well-known in the Senate, where he drafted legislation, pushed for funding and led congressional delegations to the country with more junior senators to focus their attention on the region. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, McCain demanded sanctions to punish Moscow. He visited troops on the front lines. He led the push for money to strengthen its economy and eventually succeeded in authorizing funds to arm Ukrainian troops with lethal weapons to fight Vladimir Putin's army.

"I started working for him in April of 2004, and he called me in right away and said, 'We've got to plan a trip, a CODEL, this summer.' And he said we should go to Ukraine," Rich Fontaine, the CEO of the Center for a New American Security and a top foreign policy adviser to McCain, said a few weeks ago.

Fontaine described McCain's commitment to the country as partially driven by what he saw as America's responsibility to help fledgling democracies. Even more important, he viewed Russia as an existential threat to the U.S.

"I think (he) would see it as a travesty that in the middle of a war where the government of Ukraine is trying to defend itself against a foreign-backed separatist movement in its east and relies on military aid from the United States, that the United States is deciding it not to provide aid for some unknown reason, and at a maximum, for (a really bad reason)," Fontaine said.

There's no way to know what McCain

would have thought of the impeachment itself. But his career in the Senate was marked by moments when his voice, and only his voice, made the difference in a debate that ultimately rested on American values and McCain's articulation of America's responsibility to promote freedom around the world. The normalization of relations with Vietnam in 1995 was one such moment, as was McCain's staunch opposition to waterboarding by the George W. Bush administration after 9/11.

But he would certainly have been speaking out today for Ukraine, whose people he often promised "your fight is our fight." And he would have raised alarms again and again over Putin and Russia, which he described as a "kleptocracy" and a "gas station masquerading as a country."

In McCain's absence, several of the senators he took to Ukraine and his nomination have taken up the cause. Connecticut Democrat Chris Murphy, who went to Ukraine with McCain in his first year as a senator, has returned to the country several times and even pushed Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Jim Risch in May to investigate Giuliani and his misadventures in the country against U.S. foreign policy. Ohio Republican Rob Portman, who co-chairs the Senate Ukraine Caucus, made the case privately to Trump in September to release the aid he was holding, which the president did later that day.

But he may, anywhere, stepped up and taken on the fight for Ukrainian democracy and against Russia with the same fight and moral clarity, especially among Republicans. "Nobody comes to mind," a national security aide for Senate Democrats told me last week. "And maybe that's the answer."

Ukraine needs a champion to step into the void. And so does the U.S. itself.

Patricia Murphy covers national politics for The Daily Beast.

## End the wait for pre-9/11 vets and their caregivers

ily caregivers save taxpayers millions of dollars each year by preventing or delaying the need to place severely disabled veterans into VA long-term care facilities.

Unfortunately, there was a catch. Due to budgetary concerns at the time the law was made available only for veterans who served on or after Sept. 11, 2001. As a result, Dennis and Donna — and thousands more like them — were left behind.

All that was supposed to have changed this fall thanks to a provision in the VA Mission Act, which was passed by Congress last year. The VA was given 16 months to update its IT systems in order to manage a larger workload, and was required to certify it was ready by Oct. 1, 2019, at which time the program would be extended to Vietnam, Korean and World War II veterans and their caregivers. However, as has occurred often in recent years, the VA failed to meet its deadline and is using it as an excuse to delay the expansion for thousands of aging veterans and their family caregivers until at least late next year, perhaps longer. This is simply unacceptable.

For Dennis and other severely injured veterans like him, there is deep disappointment that they and their loved ones must continue waiting for the VA to provide them access to the full array of caregiver services and support that have been provided to post-9/11 veterans and their caregivers for almost a decade. Yet despite the congressional mandate, the VA has not even committed to a new start date for the caregiver expansion, raising questions about whether this is even a priority for the department.

Enough is enough. It's time for Congress to step in and end the wait. The VA continues to operate and administer the caregiver

program for thousands of pre-9/11 veterans using existing IT systems and still continues accepting new applications from them. Compared with other IT challenges the VA has faced, there is no good excuse why it was unable to complete this over the past year and a half. It has become clear that leaving the starting date of the caregiver expansion up to the discretion of the VA secretary is no longer an option.

Congress needs to step in and amend the caregiver law to establish a date at which time the VA must complete its application processing applications from pre-9/11 veterans and caregivers. If the VA is still unable to launch additional IT capability to manage new enrollees by then, it can and must find ways to work around those limitations on a temporary basis until upgrades are complete. That is the only way to meet the implementation schedule of the exponentially larger Veterans Community Care Program in June, a law that affected millions of veterans. It's clear that the VA can solve IT challenges when it is a priority.

For decades, family caregivers have made the difference for severely injured and disabled veterans from World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars, all without the full support and recognition of their service and sacrifice. Caregiving becomes significantly harder with age; many family caregivers don't know how much longer they can continue without the kind of support offered by the VA's comprehensive caregiver program. It's time to expand the caregiver assistance program and end their wait.

Randy Reese, a combat veteran of the Persian Gulf War, is executive director of Disabled American Veterans' Washington headquarters.

## OPINION

## What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Bait-and-switch on Trump plan to pull flavored e-cigarettes? **Los Angeles Times**

Faced with a doubling outbreak of a mysterious vaping-related illness and the skyrocketing use of electronic cigarettes among teens, President Donald Trump announced in September that the Food and Drug Administration would pull flavored electronic-cigarettes from the market, possibly within weeks.

"People are dying," the president said during a televised news conference with the heads of the FDA and the Department of Health and Human Services. He promised quick action, and he was right to do so. At that point, six people had died from three new illnesses, and another 10 were hospitalized with severe lung damage. An alarming number of the victims were young adults or teens who said they used vaping devices for both cannabis and nicotine. Since then, 44 people have died and more than 2,000 people have been sickened.

Trump's plan, reportedly urged by his wife and eldest daughter, was a good one. Never mind that it wasn't a perfect answer to the current crisis. Even then, the vaping illness was suspected to be primarily caused by use of black market vaping devices modified to contain cannabis or THC and containing vitamin E.

But a ban on flavored e-cigarettes is still good public health policy. Vaping use among minors has grown precipitously in recent years — doubling in just the last two years to about a quarter of all high school seniors, studies show. The trend is being driven by an addiction to flavor like candy and fruit. Nearly 80% of teens who vape said they do so because of the flavors. And even if they aren't using the aftermarket products associated with the vaping illness, the high levels of nicotine in e-cigarettes hook users quickly, and nicotine use presents its own health risks.

It seemed possible that Trump's ban would go into effect. Vaping isn't the political third rail that guns are. Who, other than the companies that profit from hooking people on this addictive but nonsensical product, could find fault with a move to protect children from an obvious harm? We should have known better.

According to The Washington Post, the FDA was set to announce on Nov. 5 that it would order flavored electronic cigarettes to be banned for sale within 30 days. But the day before the announcement, reports say, Trump decided to not sign the "decision memo" out of concern that it might lead to job losses that could be used against him during his reelection campaign.

This is just another example of Trump's tendency to say one thing and then do another. Such was the case when Trump said he would support sensible gun control measures. Or when he said he would support a ban on assault weapons (background checks) after a particularly bad run of mass shootings, but then flip-flopped after strong words from the National Rifle Association. Or when the president said his administration would stop separating families at the border and continued to do so. Or when he said he would support the Trump administration's plan to reduce drug prices by blocking a practice that benefits drug-buying insurance middlemen.

It's not too late for Trump to sign the order that would direct the FDA to ban electronic cigarette flavors immediately — before the courts can change his mind again. But we won't hold our breath.



CHRIS LANDSBERGER, THE OKLAHOMAN/AP

**Judge Thad Balkman reads a summary of his decision in the opioid trial in Norman, Okla., in August. On Nov. 15, Balkman admitted that his decimal place error had created a \$107 million mistake he and reduced the amount Johnson & Johnson must pay the state to help clean up the opioid crisis by \$107 million to \$465 million.**

Judge's decimal point error a teachable moment for math **Chicago Tribune**

Judge Thad Balkman has had several brushes with fame. When he was 14 years old, filmmakers shooting "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" used the Balkman family's house in Long Beach, Calif., as Ferris' suburban Chicago home. In high school, Balkman was elected president of a senior class that included entertainer Snoop Dogg. And after law school in Oklahoma, Balkman had a distinguished run in that state's legislature.

Unfortunately, though, the judge's latest moment of notoriety is much different — a humiliation borne of his humanity. All of us make mistakes, although usually not in legal judgments against a consumer product. Goliath such as Johnson & Johnson. On Nov. 15, Balkman had to admit that his decimal place error had created a \$107 million mistake in an opioid case verdict that had been big news from coast to coast.

Last summer Balkman heard the first case to go to trial among thousands of cases nationwide claiming that drug companies and distributors marketed opioids too vigorously and thus are liable for provoking a deadly epidemic of overdoses. In August he ordered Johnson & Johnson to pay \$572 million for its role in an opioid crisis that, Oklahoma's attorney general contended, had killed 4,653 people in that state from 2007 to 2017. Balkman's verdict received extensive media coverage. It's expected to shape settlement negotiations over more than 2,000 similar lawsuits filed by local, state and tribal governments. Many of those cases now are consolidated before a federal judge in Ohio.

Johnson & Johnson lawyers then noticed that Balkman evidently hadn't done what his math teachers surely had taught him to do: When solving a problem, first estimate your answer. Then do the math — twice.

In his August order, Balkman had included in the \$572 million his calculation that it would cost Oklahoma birthing hospitals \$107,683,000 for training to treat infants born dependent on opioids. Except the judge had made a three-place decimal error. The true cost is \$107,683.

Balkman admitted his error in October and, on Nov. 15, lowered the \$572 million judgment to \$465 million.

Judge Balkman, we write about this with empathy. Here at the Chicago Tribune, we make mistakes. Were he alive, the not-quite-President Thomas E. Dewey could tell you about a doozy we made in 1948. We admire your admission of error, and applaud your good humor in declaring, "That will be the last time I use that calculator."

More important than our applause, you now are a prospective lesson plan celebrity to America's 3.2 million math teachers. Students

routinely complain to them that "I'll never use math in real life" or "This calculator knows all the math I'll ever need." The teachers now can retort with the saga of a judge, his verdict and his imaginary \$107 million.

Countries that want to shut off internet tip hand **The Washington Post**

Iran had a blunt solution last weekend to an eruption of protests by angry citizens: Turn off the internet. All of it.

Web shutdowns have become a common strategy for repressive governments, but experts say last weekend's response to widespread demonstrations over a spike in gasoline prices is the biggest yet. It took officials 24 hours to achieve their aim, but once they did, only 5% of regular users — including top officials — were online. Those who were cut off were unable to communicate beyond Iran's borders and within them.

Iran's move is notable for its complexity. Many developing nations whose leaders have hit the switch recently have had to do just that: hit the switch, and only one, because the country connects through a single, state-sponsored service provider. The internet in Iran, by contrast, is more diverse. The government didn't purchase it off the shelf for an all-in-one installation, but private contractors built it bit by bit. Taking it away required hitting multiple switches, or sending multiple orders to multiple parties.

The threat going forward is that the nations that remain mostly unwired will create networks that are, as Alp Tokor, of watchdog organization Netblocks, puts it, "disruptable by design" — much like China's carefully constructed Great Firewall. These nations, mostly in Africa and Latin America, are already at the center of a battle over whether the web will remain worldwide at all, or whether countries will maintain sovereign internets with tight government control.

Iran laying the foundation for this vision of control took effect in Russia this month, allowing the government to block traffic from abroad "in an emergency" and imposing requirements on service providers that would make it easier to impose the sort of shutdown Iran achieved last week. "I don't expect, perhaps, within the 24-hour slog, Russia also led a United Nations resolution whose end goal is a treaty that could expand the definition of cyberspace so broadly, and give governments so much leeway to prevent supposed incursions, that all sorts of ordinary uses of the internet could end up prohibited."

Iran's allies want the weekend: the same thing Iran wanted over the weekend:

to shut up and shut in their citizens. Those countries that still believe the internet has light to offer can't afford to let the worst offenders lead the way to extinguishing it.

## Clicking 'dislike' for agencies' social media monitoring

**The Orange County (Calif.) Register** Social media monitoring by law enforcement agencies has drawn scrutiny from a coalition of free speech and civil rights groups, raising important questions about privacy as well as oversight of the use of government power.

A statement released on Nov. 6 was signed by more than 50 organizations including the Brennan Center for Justice, the ACLU, the Institute for Free Speech and the Electronic Frontier Foundation. It cites harmful impacts from social media surveillance that should concern lawmakers and the public. Of particular concern, activities protected by the First Amendment could be stifled or chilled by online surveillance. Local police and federal agencies have monitored social media to track political protests and events. "This information may be disseminated to other federal, state and local government agencies and the public," the statement says. "The use of social media monitoring for law enforcement purposes could be overreaching immigration enforcement," the groups stated.

In one instance cited, the Boston Police Department used a monitoring tool to track particular terms and hashtags, including #BlackLivesMatter. The New York City Police Department has used online surveillance to track suspected gang members. Without adequate oversight, communities of color could be disproportionately or unfairly subjected to police scrutiny for engaging in constitutionally protected activities.

The public remains generally in the dark about these practices. One review of 157 law enforcement agencies using social media surveillance tools found that fewer than 15% had publicly available policies regarding the details of the agencies' social media monitoring. What the public needs is an argument to be made that specific investigative techniques should not be disclosed, the public is entitled to know if law enforcement agencies are collecting and retaining data on individuals. That sort of thing generally requires a warrant.

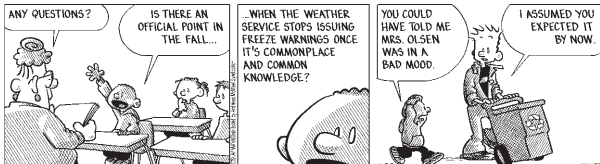
Once collected, data is mined in the future, separated from its original context and aggregated with possibly unrelated data. Given the breadth and depth of information available from social media, the potential for misuse is concerning. The location data alone reveals more than most people would want to be publicly sharing with a government database.

In 2016, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter changed their policies to end the practice of developers selling monitoring tools to law enforcement agencies. Companies such as Geofeedia had developed mining techniques that collected data automatically about users and their location. The policy shift followed an investigation by the ACLU, which published documents about the tracking of activists at protests in Baltimore in 2015 following the death of Freddie Gray, who died in police custody, and in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014 after the police shot and killed a 18-year-old Black man.

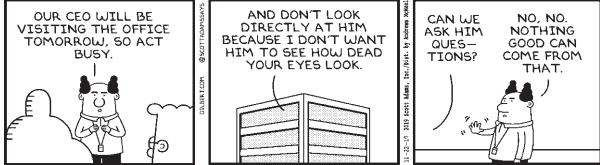
However, even without automated data mining, there are concerns about surveillance. The coalition letter warns that some law enforcement agencies have used fake accounts to engage people on social media as part of undercover investigations. This is a good idea. It is not to be used for public posts into a more troubling area of misrepresentation and deception.

Policymakers should examine the full range of social media use by law enforcement agencies and set boundaries. What may at first appear to be a useful tool for investigators can too quickly turn into a weapon of oppression.

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



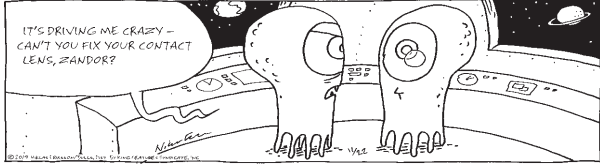
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12						13			14	
15						16			17	
		18				19			20	
21	22			23				24		
25			26		27		28			
29			30			31			32	33
		35				36			37	
38	39	40				41		42		43
44					45				46	
47				48				49		50
52					53				54	
55					56				57	

## ACROSS

- Bulletproof garments
- Chess piece
- Roast VIPs
- Caper
- Kimono closer
- Right angle
- "Swell!"
- Special anniversary
- Chewy candy
- Tide type
- Be sick
- Gun the engine
- Representative
- Entreaty
- Prepare for battle again
- Assembly with all members present
- Baby's wear
- '70s club
- Poolroom prop
- Compote fruits
- Tummy muscles
- Kanga's kid
- Jocular Johnson
- Lowlife, in slang
- Biblical sea
- Leather strips
- Smile pair
- Tolkien creature
- Idyllic places
- Up-to-date
- "A Wonderful Life"
- Losing ventures?

## DOWN

- Moving-day rental
- Away from WSW
- Marvel Comics mastermind
- One of the Jackson 5
- Use elbow grease on
- California desert
- Border on
- Pen tip
- Donnybrook
- Pristine
- Nodded off
- Director Bergman
- Bacteria
- PC program
- Under the weather
- "Entourage" character
- Nobelist Sakharov
- Pueblo material
- Sue Grafton's "for Underworld"
- One who's out early
- Green prefix
- "Top Hat" studio
- Insertion symbols
- Nonbeliever
- Obliterate
- Attorney- 42
- Stitched
- Penny
- Mani counterpart
- Floral ring
- Stick with a kick
- Snake's warning

## Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	T	A	B	F	A	R	A	M	F	M
I	O	T	A	E	Y	E	P	A	L	E
G	R	I	N	E	D	I	R	O	N	
H	O	T	D	O	G	S	H	A	M	E
				I	N	S	O	R	O	
B	E	S	T	H	E	A	V	Y	S	E
O	W	E		U	N	D	E	M	O	
S	E	T	A	S	I	D	E	S	T	U
			B	B	S		Q	U	E	
S	C	A	L	E	S		U	S	E	D
L	A	C	E		A	N	A	M	A	L
I	N	K	S		G	O	T	E	L	A
P	E	S	T		E	V	E	D	I	N

## 11-22

## CRYPTOQUIP

IWHZ OLV GHXKSO Q ZHI  
 OLXM WQXJLX FQZCPQXM'R  
 WHKUWE, WQGH OLV PHQRVXHC  
 EWH REQEVXH LS FKJHXEO?  
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IS IT TRUE THAT ONCE-PRISTINE TOWN IS NOW TOTALLY UNCLEAN AND LITTERED UP? EYESORE HOPE NOT!  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals W



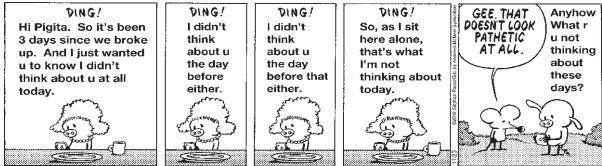
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



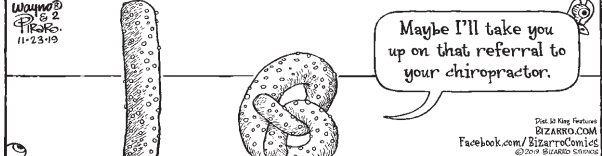
Carpe Diem



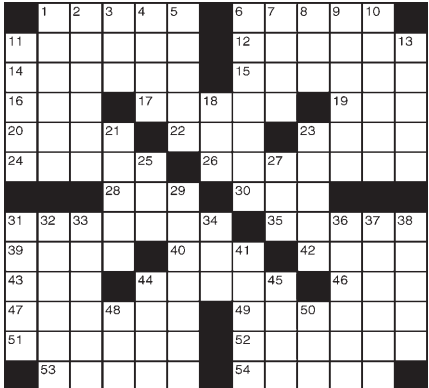
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword



## ACROSS

- 1 Challenges
- 6 Pricey violin
- 11 Nikon product
- 12 More gung-ho
- 14 Luxury stadium seating
- 15 New York player
- 16 Cauldron
- 17 Belgrade natives
- 19 Mormon church, for short
- 20 Slightly
- 22 Part of RSVP
- 23 Borscht base
- 24 Drew of fiction
- 26 Changes genetically
- 28 Egos' counterparts
- 30 Right angle
- 31 Hargitay of "Law & Order: SVU"
- 35 Elegance
- 39 Jal —
- 40 Orange veggie
- 42 Tizzy
- 43 Flushed
- 44 Santa —
- 46 Depot (Abbr.)
- 47 Singer Yearwood
- 49 Elevated road
- 51 Daze
- 52 Stopwatches
- 53 Noisy kiss
- 54 Luminaries

## DOWN

- 1 Sioux people
- 2 "The Joy Luck Club" author
- 3 Civil War soldier
- 4 Love god
- 5 Jazz band section
- 6 Heavenly color
- 7 Afternoon affairs
- 8 Stimp's pal
- 9 Short sock
- 10 One of the Ramones
- 11 Senate broadcaster
- 13 Takes five
- 18 Crater part
- 21 603, in Roman numerals
- 23 Fancy dances
- 25 QB's stats
- 27 Patient's need, briefly
- 29 Small songbird
- 31 Shopping centers
- 32 Warnings
- 33 Curie's find
- 34 Small battery
- 36 Retort
- 37 Indian instruments
- 38 Remains
- 41 Requirements
- 44 Ice-cream flavor, for short
- 45 "SNL" segment
- 48 Resort
- 50 Singer
- Sumac

## Answer to Previous Puzzle



## 11-23

## CRYPTOQUIP

ANC-NEEHRV YHS PANBS  
 SYXV YBKZXVZ OHCSG  
 FXHONK ZVKHUVKO SBXKVZ  
 RNWWPKZNO: "SYV SYHXS  
 ZNUVK."

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN YOU VERIFY A NEW YORK HARBOR LANDMARK'S HEIGHT, HAVE YOU MEASURED THE STATUE OF LIBERTY?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: C equals X

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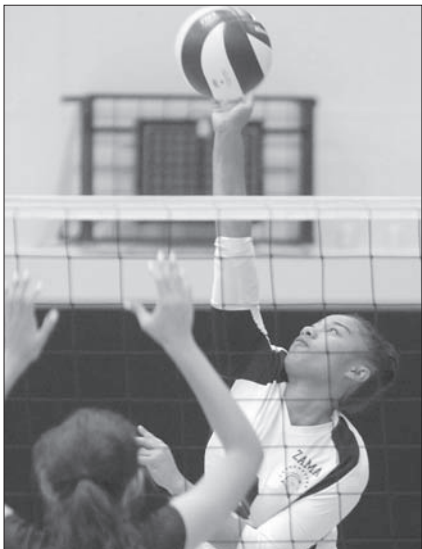
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## HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## DODEA PACIFIC ATHLETES OF THE YEAR



## Volleyball: Grace Bryant, Zama

By DAVE ORNAUER  
Stars and Stripes

Talent and desire were never issues with the Zama volleyball program, coaches and players say; they have had plenty of both over the years.

It was finishing, team leader Grace Bryant said, that always seemed to hang up the Trojans when it counted.

No longer, Zama captured its first Far East Division II crown and ended a 22-year drought, winning its first Far East title of any kind since 1997.

Bryant, named the tournament's best hitter and All-Tournament for the third time, finished with 20 kills as the Trojans swept Edgren.

It was how she and her veteran teammates would rally the younger players, spurring them on to bigger things as the Trojans got one point after another.

"That made us stronger as a team," she said. "We trusted each other. In the (team) huddles we would say how we loved each other, believed in each other, kept reminding ourselves we were capable of doing anything."

Thanks to that victory and Bryant's performance in the match, and a regular season in which the Trojans even won a regular-season match over Division I champion Seisen, Bryant has been named Stars and Stripes Pacific volleyball Athlete of the Year.

Bryant edged out a crowded field including libero and Division I tournament Most Valuable Player Momoka Umaniyi and setter Grace Starr of Seisen, D-

I runner-up Kubasaki's Abigail Robinson and D-II MVP Emirj Ichijo of Edgren, among others.

Bryant earned D-II MVP honors on second-place Zama last year, but the Trojans lost in five sets to Christian Academy Japan.

Through this year's championship, Bryant said she and the returners from 2018 reminded the newer players of what came before and what needed to happen then.

"We told them our stories about last year and how we couldn't finish as we wanted to," said Bryant, a junior outside hitter. "This season ... there were a lot of situations where we had to have each other's backs. We would stay humble, never getting too cocky. One point at a time."

Every player on the Trojans played a crucial role in getting them to the championship, coach Veronica Jones said. Bryant, on the other hand, was vital in every sense.

"Grace never leaves the court," Jones said of her hitting, receiving, serving and "especially leadership. We cannot win without her physical presence or leadership on the court."

Now that the banner has been tacked onto the wall of Trojans Gyn, Bryant says she'll start conditioning for track and field season beginning in March.

Bryant is slated to graduate in June 2021, after her senior season of volleyball — by which time, Bryant said, maybe the idea that the Trojans won will have settled in.

"It doesn't feel real at all," Bryant said.



## Football: Dean Owen, Kadena

By DAVE ORNAUER  
Stars and Stripes

KADENA AIR BASE, Okinawa — Where the most recent of Kadena's Pacific-record seven Far East Division I football championships is concerned, defense led the way.

En route to a 7-0 record, including a 14-12 win in the Nov. 9 D-I final over Humphreys, the Panthers led Pacific high school football in scoring defense, allowing 5.7 points per game, recorded two shutouts and gave up just 130.6 yards per game.

Leading the way was Dean Owen, a senior lineman/linebacker who recorded six sacks and averaged 8.1 tackles per game. But it was more than numbers, Panthers coach Sergio Mendoza said, that made Owen the player he was in the just-completed season.

"He was the heart of the defense, and it was because of that defense that we were successful," said Mendoza, who just completed his 15th season as Kadena's coach.

"I have never coached somebody who willed himself to this position" from his freshman year, Mendoza said. "His aggression, his vision inside the tackle box was amazing. And he was a good leader. He lifted his teammates when they were down, and he led by example."

For all of his achievements, Owen has been named Stars and Stripes Pacific high school football Athlete of the Year.

Owen nosed out a field of

nominees that included quarterback Tim Matelski and running back Brenden Jackson of Division II champion Zama; running backs Matthew Torrecillas and Marshall China of D-II runner-up M.C. Perry; and seniors Junior Gregory and David Key of D-I runner-up Humphreys.

Whether it was Owen making a routine stop on an opening play, to a critical extra-point block in the D-I championship, to the goal-line stand on which the Panthers halted Humphreys quarterback Deontaye Gregory to end the final, Owen said it didn't matter who got credit for a huge play.

"It doesn't matter who makes a play as long as the play is made," Owen said. "We're all working as a unit, to reach a higher goal, to achieve greatness."

Owen and the Panthers also won the D-I title in 2017, but he said this one was more memorable because of the "stronger bond" the team shared. "I'm very proud of the work we did to get where we are now," he said.

Owen not only served as a key player on defense; he also played guard and was the Panthers' long-snapper.

"He was the lynchpin of the interior," Mendoza said.

Owen said he experienced mixed feelings as time ran out on the D-I final and Kadena's football season — his last one.

"It was my last game in high school," he said. "I wanted to go out with a bang."

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## Memphis' Wiseman to sit out 12 games

By TERESA M. WALLER  
Associated Press

The James Wiseman saga finally has a resolution.

After months of back-and-forth between Memphis and the NCAA, the sports governing body has cleared the heralded freshman to return to the basketball court on Jan. 12.

Wiseman will sit out a total of 12 games under a decision announced by the NCAA.

The sports governing body also announced Wednesday that Wiseman must donate \$11,500 — the amount of impermissible benefits the NCAA ruled he received — to a charity of his choice to regain his eligibility.

The University of Memphis issued a statement that the NCAA informed school officials that Wiseman must sit out nine games for the infraction and three more for the games the freshman already has played this season.

"Based on case precedent, the circumstances of this case and other mitigating factors, the University will immediately appeal this decision," Memphis said. "We expect a more fair and equitable resolution, and we will exhaust all avenues on James' behalf."

Coach Penny Hardaway made clear after Wednesday night's 68-58 win over Arkansas-Little Rock that he wasn't happy with the punishment even as Memphis now knows how many games Wiseman will miss.

"I've stated from the beginning I didn't think it was fair," Hardaway said. "There's nothing I can do about it. Obviously, James should be on the floor. That's just how I feel."

Wiseman had filed a lawsuit to contest playing after the NCAA ruled him "likely ineligible" for receiving the impermissible benefits from Hardaway — who was not the Memphis coach at the time.

Wiseman withdrew the lawsuit against the NCAA on Nov. 14 after Memphis played him in the Tigers' first three games of the season. The 16th-ranked Tigers were 2-1 with the 7-foot-1 center on the court.

Once Wiseman withdrew his lawsuit, Memphis held him out of a win over Alcorn State while working to resolve his eligibility status with the NCAA. His first game back will be when the Tigers visit South Florida.

The NCAA had ruled Wiseman was "likely ineligible" due to \$11,500 Hardaway gave the center's family for moving expenses from Nashville to Memphis in the summer of 2017.



# NHL

## Around the league

# Stamkos hits another milestone

## Tampa captain gets 400th goal in 763rd game

By FRED GOODALL  
Associated Press

**S**teven Stamkos celebrated another milestone in a stellar career with grace and humility.

The longtime captain of the Tampa Bay Lightning scored his 400th goal last weekend, joining an elite group that includes eight other active players — Alex Ovechkin, Patrick Marleau, Marian Hossa, Sidney Crosby, Ilya Kovalchuk, Eric Staal, Joe Thornton and Marian Gaborik.

"I'm sure this will be one of those moments you reflect on after the fact, but in saying that it's still pretty surreal," the six-time All-Star, who's played his entire career with Tampa Bay, said after accomplishing the feat during a loss at home to the Winnipeg Jets.

"You never envision scoring that many goals in the NHL, and hopefully a lot more to come," Stamkos added. "But it's a great honor and privilege to play in this league for a long time, and to do it with one organization is pretty special."

At 29, Stamkos is in his 12th season and no longer the most dynamic scorer on a deep, talented roster featuring reigning league MVP and scoring champion Nikita Kucherov and rising star Brayden Point. He remains the face of the franchise, though, and entered Tuesday night's game against defending Stanley Cup champion St. Louis with a team-leading seven goals, along with 13 assists for 20 points.

He scored No. 400 on a one-timer late in a 4-3 loss Saturday to the Jets, reaching the milestone in his 763rd career game. Among active players with at least 400, only Ovechkin did it in



Tampa Bay Lightning center Steven Stamkos celebrates after scoring his 400th goal Saturday.

fewer games.

"Minor hockey to juniors, I don't think I've scored 400 goals in my life and he's done it at the highest level you can play at. What an amazing accomplishment... Probably him and Ovechkin are the best goal scorers in the league," Lightning forward Pat Maroon said.

Maroon, in his first season with Tampa Bay, signed with the Lightning as a free agent after helping the Blues win their first NHL title.

"Every single night he proves he's a natural goal scorer, and that's why teams look on him all the time. He's dangerous at all parts of the ice, especially in the O-zone," Maroon said. "I'm really happy for him... Now he gets to chase 500."

A more immediate goal is to help the Lightning get back to the playoffs, where Tampa Bay was swept in the first round after matching the league record for regular-season victories with 62.

The team is off to a slower-than-anticipated start — 9-7-2 after Tuesday night's 3-1 loss at St. Louis — however coach Jon Cooper and his players say there's no cause for alarm.

Thursday night's game at Chicago concludes a season-opening stretch in which the Lightning play 12 of 19 games on the road, including an extended trip to Sweden for the NHL Global Series, where they won two games against Buffalo and felt they began to come together as a team.

This weekend starts a five-week stretch in which they will play 14 of 18 at home. "We've got to build on what happened in Sweden. It will be nice come end of November (and) December to get a little rhythm at home, and hopefully we can get a little traction," Cooper said.

"Obviously, being away for two weeks is tough, but I'd say we made the most of it as a group," Stamkos said. "We got two big wins. It doesn't stay over there, though. It's about coming together now. We've had a really difficult season. We see the record that we have with two straight weeks on the road and the majority of our games being played (on the road). I think we're pretty happy with the results... I think we took a step forward (in Sweden)."

One potential benefit to playing so many early road games is the schedule has allowed for additional practice time, where the Lightning have focused on several areas that were problematic during the team's first-round postseason loss to Columbus last spring.

## Holtyb bouncing back

Defensive miscues in front of Washington Capitals goaltender Braden Holtyb have made his

numbers this season look less than stellar. But the 2016 Vezina Trophy winner has been better than the stats indicate and specifically is 10-1-1 with a 2.40 goals-against average and .926 save percentage since a brief "reset" in mid-October.

"I said from that day there's no goaltending controversy and there isn't," coach Todd Reirden said. "He's a winner. He's a competitor. He battles. He's not stopping until he figures out a way to improve. It's such a credit to him as a person."

## Flyers on track

The typically slow-starting Philadelphia Flyers have points in 14 of their first 20 games, and much of the credit for that goes to Alain Vigneault. Philadelphia's new coach put in video teaching that gets players to see their mistakes to correct them, and an onus on accountability is working.

"What we're trying to do here is tell our players what they need to do on the ice, what they need to do as far as team preparation," Vigneault said. "Accountability, I think a lot of it has to do with understanding the game. When you can understand the game and evaluate your performance the way you're supposed to, it helps you work on certain things and it helps you improve your game."

## Game of the week

**Edmonton at Arizona on Sunday:** The Pacific Division-leading Oilers hold a narrow lead over the surprising Coyotes. Arizona had shootout wins last week over division leaders Washington and St. Louis, and posted identical 3-0 wins over Calgary and Los Angeles in its last two games.

AP hockey writer Stephen Whyno in

## Scoreboard

Eastern Conference									
Atlantic Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	PP	PA
Boston	21	11	5	5	31	75	54	31	24
Florida	21	11	5	5	27	79	76	31	24
Montreal	22	11	8	3	27	75	65	31	24
Buffalo	21	10	8	3	23	60	63	31	24
Toronto	23	9	10	4	27	75	65	31	24
Ottawa	22	10	11	1	21	61	70	31	24
Tampa Bay	18	9	7	2	20	65	62	31	24
Detroit	22	7	13	3	17	54	86	31	24
Metropolitan Division									
Washington	20	12	4	4	36	90	73	31	24
N.Y. Islanders	19	15	3	1	31	63	46	31	24
Carolina	21	13	7	1	27	74	61	31	24
Pittsburgh	22	11	8	3	25	71	65	31	24
Philadelphia	21	10	7	4	24	63	65	31	24
N.Y. Rangers	19	9	8	2	20	64	65	31	24
Columbus	20	8	8	4	20	50	65	31	24
New Jersey	20	7	9	4	18	51	74	31	24
Western Conference									
Central Division									
St. Louis	22	13	4	5	31	65	62	31	24
Colorado	22	13	8	1	27	61	65	31	24
Winnipeg	22	12	8	2	26	61	53	31	24
Dallas	21	9	8	4	22	63	65	31	24
Nashville	20	9	8	3	21	71	68	31	24
Minnesota	21	8	10	3	18	57	70	31	24
Pacific Division									
Edmonton	22	14	6	2	31	76	63	31	24
Arizona	22	13	7	2	28	64	49	31	24
Vegas	23	11	9	3	25	72	67	31	24
Vancouver	24	10	11	3	24	70	69	31	24
Calgary	24	10	11	3	23	62	73	31	24
Anaheim	22	10	10	2	22	64	64	31	24
San Jose	22	10	11	1	21	65	78	31	24
Los Angeles	22	10	12	1	17	53	75	31	24
Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division are in wild card position for conference advance to playoffs.									
Wednesday's games									
Ottawa 2, Montreal 1, OT									
N.Y. Rangers 4, Washington 1									
Thursday's games									
Buffalo at Boston									
Detroit at Columbus									
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Islanders									
Philadelphia at Carolina									
Anaheim at Florida									
Vancouver at Nashville									
Calgary at St. Louis									
Colorado at Minnesota									
Tampa Bay at Chicago									
Winnipeg at Dallas									
San Jose at Vegas									
Edmonton at Los Angeles									
Friday's games									
N.Y. Rangers at Pittsburgh									
San Jose at Vegas									
Saturday's games									
Vancouver at Washington									
Calgary at Philadelphia									
Arizona at Los Angeles									
Tampa Bay at Chicago									
Columbus at Winnipeg									
Edmonton at New Jersey									
N.Y. Rangers at Montreal									
Minnesota at Boston									
Detroit at Carolina									
Toronto at Colorado									
Nashville at St. Louis									
Chicago at Dallas									
San Jose at Vegas									
N.Y. Islanders at San Jose									
Sunday's games									
Buffalo at Florida									
Carolina at Detroit									
Edmonton at Arizona									
Leaders									
Goal scoring									
Name, Team	GP	Goals	Assists	Pts	GF	GA	PP	PA	+/−
David Pastrnak, Boston	21	19	11	30	75	54	31	24	19
Leon Draisaitl, Edmonton	21	18	11	29	75	65	31	24	15
Connor McDavid, Edmonton	23	15	15	30	75	65	31	24	15
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	19	15	11	26	64	65	31	24	15
Auston Matthews, Toronto	23	14	14	28	63	63	31	24	14
Jack Eichel, Buffalo	21	13	11	24	60	63	31	24	13
Nathan MacKinnon, Colorado	21	13	11	24	61	53	31	24	13
Brad Marchand, Boston	21	13	11	24	74	61	31	24	13
Nikolai Pajun, New Jersey	22	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Jean-Philippe Pageau, Ottawa	22	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Anthony Mantha, Detroit	23	12	11	23	63	65	31	24	12
Patrick Kane, Chicago	21	11	11	22	74	61	31	24	11
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	19	11	11	22	64	65	31	24	11
Brayden Schenn, St. Louis	21	11	11	22	63	65	31	24	11
Nikolai Pajun, N.Y. Islanders	22	11	11	22	63	65	31	24	11
Connor Garland, Arizona	22	10	11	21	61	70	31	24	10
Jake Guentzel, Pittsburgh	21	10	11	21	63	65	31	24	10
Jonathan Huberdeau, Florida	21	10	11	21	63	65	31	24	10
Evgeny Kuznetsov, Washington	21	10	11	21	63	65	31	24	10
Plus/Minus									
Name, Team	GP	Goals	Assists	Pts	GF	GA	PP	PA	+/−
J. T. Compher, Colorado	22	17	11	28	61	53	31	24	17
John Carlson, Washington	24	15	11	26	61	53	31	24	15
Brian Dumoulin, Pittsburgh	22	14	11	25	61	53	31	24	14
Brad Marchand, Boston	21	13	11	24	74	61	31	24	13
Jared McCann, Pittsburgh	19	14	11	25	63	65	31	24	14
Matthew Barzal, N.Y. Islanders	23	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Zdeno Chrasa, Boston	21	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Dougie Hamilton, Tampa Bay	22	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Miro Heiskanen, Dallas	22	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Davey Krelch, Boston	21	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Ryan Graves, Colorado	23	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Jacob Slavin, Carolina	23	13	11	24	63	65	31	24	13
Pavel Buchnevich, N.Y. Islanders	19	9	11	20	64	65	31	24	9
Phillip Danault, Montreal	22	9	11	20	63	65	31	24	9
Victor Meade, Washington	22	9	11	20	63	65	31	24	9
Max Domi, Washington	22	9	11	20	63	65	31	24	9
Rickto Meye, Montreal	22	9	11	20	63	65	31	24	9

## NBA/MLB

## Scoreboard

## Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct GB
Boston	11	3	.786 —
Toronto	10	4	.714 1
Philadelphia	9	5	.643 2
Brooklyn	6	8	.429 5
New York	4	11	.267 7½

## Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct GB
Miami	10	3	.769 —
Orlando	6	8	.429 4½
Charlotte	6	9	.400 5
Washington	4	8	.333 5½
Atlanta	4	10	.286 6½

## Central Division

	W	L	Pct GB
Milwaukee	11	3	.786 —
Indiana	8	6	.571 3
Chicago	10	5	.667 ½
Cleveland	4	10	.286 7
Detroit	4	10	.286 7

## Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct GB
Houston	11	4	.733 —
Dallas	9	5	.643 1½
Memphis	9	5	.643 1½
New Orleans	9	5	.643 1½
San Antonio	9	5	.643 1½

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct GB
Denver	10	3	.769 —
Utah	9	5	.643 1½
Minnesota	8	7	.533 3
Oklahoma City	5	8	.385 5½
Portland	4	10	.286 6½

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct GB
L.A. Lakers	10	2	.857 —
Phoenix	7	5	.583 2½
Sacramento	6	7	.462 5½
Golden State	3	13	.188 10

## Tuesday's games

Golden State 114, Milwaukee 95	
New Orleans 115, Portland 104	
Sacramento 120, Phoenix 116	
L.A. Lakers 112, Oklahoma City 107	

## Wednesday's games

Philadelphia 109, New York 104	
New Orleans 135, San Antonio 132	
Brooklyn 101, Charlotte 91	
Dallas 142, Golden State 94	
Miami 124, Cleveland 100	
Milwaukee 135, Atlanta 127	
Toronto 113, Orlando 97	
Chicago 109, Detroit 89	
Phoenix 119, Minnesota 95	
Denver 105, Houston 95	
L.A. Clippers 107, Boston 104, OT	

## Thursday's games

Portland at Milwaukee	
New Orleans at Phoenix	
Friday's games	
Atlanta at Detroit	
Charlotte at Washington	
Sacramento at Brooklyn	
L.A. Lakers at Oklahoma City	
Miami at Chicago	
San Antonio at Philadelphia	
Cleveland at Dallas	
Boston at Denver	
Golden State at Utah	
Houston at L.A. Clippers	

## Saturday's games

Phoenix at Minnesota	
Chicago at Charlotte	
Atlanta at Indiana	
Miami at Philadelphia	
San Antonio at New York	
Toronto at Atlanta	
L.A. Lakers at Memphis	
Portland at Cleveland	
Detroit at Milwaukee	
New Orleans at Utah	
Dallas at Houston	
San Antonio at Washington	
Phoenix at Denver	
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers	

## Sunday's games

Dallas at Houston	
San Antonio at Washington	
Phoenix at Denver	
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers	

## Leaders

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Harden, HOU	159	106	576	38.4	
Antetokunmpo, MIL	14	155	98	42.7	30.5
Beal, WAS	12	130	69	36.4	30.3
Doncic, DAL	14	135	106	41.9	29.9
Lillard, POR	14	126	103	40.1	28.6
Young, SAC	11	112	59	31.9	28.5
Young, ATL	13	113	84	34.9	26.8
Towns, MIN	13	115	57	33.8	26.0
Wiggins, MIN	12	120	40	30.7	25.6
Ingram, NOR	10	95	40	25.4	25.4
Booker, PHX	13	118	51	35.2	25.1
Davis, LAL	13	116	85	32.8	25.2
James, LAL	13	118	52	35.2	25.1
James, LAL	14	132	59	35.0	25.0
Mitchell, UTA	14	127	66	34.8	24.9
Brooklynn, NY	10	109	62	32.9	24.9
Walker, BOS	14	100	66	31.7	22.6
White, BOS	10	96	32	22.5	22.5
Westbrook, HOU	13	104	59	28.4	21.8
DeRozan, SAN	15	123	79	32.5	21.7

## Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Drummond, DET	14	135	125	260	18.6
Antetokunmpo, MIL	14	33	160	193	13.8
Sabonis, IND	12	47	118	165	13.8
Mitchell, UTA	14	41	121	162	11.6
Capela, UTA	13	41	137	178	13.7
White, BOS	10	15	118	133	13.3
Towns, MIN	13	34	123	157	12.1
White, BOS	15	115	168	283	12.0
Vucetic, ORL	14	121	162	283	11.6
Embiid, PHI	10	26	89	115	11.5

## Assists

	G	AST	AVG
James, LAL	14	152	11.1
Doncic, DAL	13	132	9.4
Young, ATL	13	112	8.6
Bridges, IND	10	102	8.2
Rubio, PHX	11	89	8.1
Teague, MIN	11	84	7.6



RICHARD W. RODRIGUEZ/AP

**Coach Gregg Popovich and the San Antonio Spurs are mired in a seven-game losing streak, the team's longest since Popovich's first season as coach, more than 20 years ago.**

## Spurs, Popovich dealing with rare losing streak

By HOWARD FENDRICH  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Forgive Gregg Popovich for not being in much of a mood to discuss the current state of the San Antonio Spurs.

Fact is, he's just not used to losing like this. Here's how long it's been since the Spurs dropped seven games in a row, the way they now have after DeMar DeRozan, LaMarcus Aldridge and the rest of the team were beaten by the lowly Washington Wizards 138-132 on Wednesday night: You have to go all the way back to the 1996-97 season to find such a rut for Pop and Co.

That was before Tim Duncan had even played a game for them — and that guy was in the arena Wednesday, sitting on the sideline as an assistant to Popovich. Before Popovich led the franchise to five NBA championships and 22 consecutive playoff appearances. Before folks such as Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili and Kawhi Leonard had come and gone.

After the latest setback, Popovich spoke to reporters only briefly.

"All in all, if you score 132 points, you should probably have a pretty good chance to win a game. The bad news is, if you give up 138, you are not going to win," he said. "I'm a really smart guy. I'm figuring that's logical. I could be wrong... There's not much else to say."

DeRozan, who scored 31 points but missed a pair of free throws with 9.9 seconds left and a chance to cut San Antonio's deficit to two, called the way things are going at the moment "extremely frustrating."

The Spurs led this one 69-63 at halftime, but let it get away with some lax defense.

They let Bradley Beal score 21 of his 33 points in the third quarter, when he shot 9-for-9. As a whole, the Wizards made 58.7% of their field-goal attempts, 60% on three-pointers.

Washington, remember, began the day last in the Eastern Con-

## By the numbers

# 8,295

Days since the last time the San Antonio Spurs had lost seven consecutive games, the period from March 5, 1997 to Nov. 20, 2019.

# 1-9

The Spurs' record in their past 10 games after a 4-1 start to the season.

# 116.2

Points allowed per game this season by San Antonio, the eighth-worst average in the league.

SOURCE: NBA.com

ference, with a 3-8 record.

San Antonio started off this season well enough, going 4-1. Since then, though, the Spurs have gone 1-9, so their skid has put them at 10-5 entering Friday night's game at the Philadelphia 76ers.

They hadn't lost seven straight since Feb. 23 to March 5, 1997, under Popovich, and the last time they had a longer drought was eight defeats from Nov. 15-30, 1996, under Bob Hill. It was during the next month that Popovich, the team's general manager, fired Hill and moved from the front office to the sideline.

San Antonio finished 20-62, won the draft lottery and took Duncan with the No. 1 overall pick.

The rest, as they say, is history.

# Astros owner mum over investigation into sign stealing

By STEPHEN HAWKINS  
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Houston Astros owner Jim Crane declined comment Wednesday on Major League Baseball's investigation into allegations of sign stealing against his team.

While walking through the lobby of the luxury hotel where MLB owners were meeting, Crane stopped briefly when approached by reporters.

"If you want to talk about baseball, I'll talk about baseball," Crane said. "What else do you want to talk about?"

When someone started to ask whether he had any comment about the allegations, Crane didn't even let that question get finished before responding, "Any other issues?"

Two sheriff's deputies working security in the lobby then stepped in and escorted the Astros owner toward a flight of stairs that led upstairs to where the meetings were taking place.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday he hopes the investigation will be completed before the start of next season and that he has authority to impose discipline beyond the loss of amateur draft picks.

Manfred was scheduled to hold a news conference Thursday after owners wrap up their meetings at the hotel adjacent to the new Texas Rangers ballpark that will open next season.

Oakland pitcher Mike Fiers told The Athletic in a story last week that while he was playing with the Astros during their 2017 World Series championship season the team stole signs during home games by using a camera positioned in center field.

Yankees president Randy Levine, whose team lost to the Astros in the AL Championship Series in 2017 and again this year, said he would leave it to the commissioner "to get to the bottom of it" and said he hadn't heard anything recently.

Asked if it was frustrating considering a seven-game ALCS loss to the Astros two years ago, Levine responded, "We have to see what the results of the investigation are before we make any comment."

During this year's ALCS, Houston players were suspected of whistling in the dugout to communicate pitch selection to batters.

Crane's appearance at the owners' meetings was his first near media since last week's report, which led to MLB expanding its investigation of the Astros.

Baseball was already looking into the Astros for an incident during the playoffs. The team



LM OTERO/AP

**Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred, during a tour of the Texas Rangers' new stadium, said he hopes the investigation into alleged sign stealing by the Houston Astros will be completed by next season.**

fired assistant general manager Brandon Taubman for directing inappropriate comments at female reporters during a clubhouse celebration after the Astros beat the New York Yankees to win the AL pennant on Oct. 19. The team issued and then retracted a statement accusing a Sports Illustrated reporter of trying to "fabricate a story." Taubman was fired on Oct. 24.

Not long after his lobby encounter with reporters that lasted less than 30 seconds, Crane joined some other owners for a tour of the Rangers' new \$1.2 billion stadium being built across the street from the ballpark the team called home the past 26 seasons.

Manfred toured the construction site Tuesday, when he addressed MLB's investigation into the Astros, who lost to Washington in Game 7 of the World Series.

"Any allegation that relates to a rule violation that could affect the outcome of a game or games is the most serious matter — it relates to the integrity of the sport," Manfred said then. "People want the game played consistent with our rules, and feel it's important that we figure out exactly what happened here and take steps to make sure that it doesn't happen in the future by imposing appropriate discipline."

Manfred didn't speculate on what that discipline would be and said it would be based on what is determined by "the facts established at the end of the investigation."

For now, Manfred said the Astros were the only team being investigated for cheating allegations.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## All-America watch

## Gators' Pitts becoming matchup 'problem'

Mackey Award slight gives TE a chip on his shoulder

By DAVE SKRETTA  
Associated Press

It was midway through the third quarter last Saturday, and Missouri had just cut Florida's lead to 13-6, when Gators quarterback Kyle Trask dropped back and saw Kyle Pitts down the right sideline.

Trask heaved the ball and Pitts, the big and rangy tight end, grabbed it along with Tigers safety Khalil Oliver. They still had control of it when they hit the ground, Pitts unwilling to let it out of his enormous paws, and it took a video review to decide who had possession.

Pitts wound up with a 25-yard catch. And three players later, Trask threw a 15-yard touchdown pass to Lamical Perine that effectively sealed the Gators' 23-6 victory.

It was just another example of why Pitts is a legitimate candidate for postseason honors, including the AP All-America team.

"Especially for the short throws over the middle, he has great body awareness to position guys up," Trask said. "If nothing else is there, you've got a big athlete that is going to make plays."

Pitts has been crucial to the Gators' continued success after losing quarterback Feleipe Franks to a season-ending knee injury. He has the second-most catches and fifth-most yards receiving among tight ends nationally, averaging 4.2 catches per game and hauling in five touchdown catches.

He'll be playing with a chip on his shoulder going forward, too.

The voting panel for the Mackey Award, given to the nation's best tight end, revealed a list of eight semifinalists Monday. The biggest absence from the list: Pitts.

Evidently, Barry Odom wasn't among the voters. The Tigers' coach called Pitts a "matchup problem," and that his defensive coaches were constantly tracking where he was all game.

"I'll hear that in my sleep tonight: 'Where's 84 lined up?'" Odom said.

There was a Mackey Award semifinalist on the field Saturday: Missouri's Albert Okuegbunam, who has caught six TDs this season yet showed in one drive against the Gators why he's been a maddening talent.

First, he dropped a pass right in his hands on first down early in the fourth quarter, something that has become a common occurrence. Then, four plays later, he snared a pass and used his huge size to shed Florida defensive back Trey Dean, who hit the ground so hard he took himself out of the game.

Okuegbunam also let his temper get the best of him in the third quarter.

The Gators were called for a late hit on quarterback Kelly Bryant, a penalty that would have given Missouri a first down. But Okuegbunam yanked Mohamoud Diabate away from the scrum and drew a flag for unsportsmanlike conduct. That meant the penalties offset and the Tigers wound up punting.

Florida wound up heading the other direction for a touchdown and a 13-3 lead.

"I've got to take accountability for that," Okuegbunam said. "Not intentionally, trying to do anything dirty, just trying to get him off our sideline. Maybe a little bit



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Florida tight end Kyle Pitts, left, shown Saturday against Missouri, has been a big reason why the Gators' passing game has survived the injury to Feleipe Franks. Pitts has the second-most catches and fifth-most yards receiving among tight ends nationally.

dramatic, but at the end of the day, I just got to be a little smarter, keep my hands off of him."

### Who's hot

Bradlee Anae, DE, Utah

The Utes have been smothering opponents, holding three of their last four without a touchdown. Anae, a senior edge rusher, has three sacks in his last two games and six in his last four.

### Who's hot

Yetur Gross-Matos, DE, Penn State

Gross-Matos was a second-team pre-season AP All-American and is a possible first-round draft pick. But he hasn't been the force coming off the edge that the Nittany Lions need him to be in recent weeks.

He has one sack over his last five games, and the last two weeks Penn State has been burned for more than 300 yards passing by No. 11 Minnesota and Indiana.

### On the line

(SEC Network analyst Cole Cubelic, a former guard at Auburn, breaks down an offensive lineman playing at an All-America level).

Jackson Carman, OT, Clemson

The sophomore has helped pave the way for a dominant Clemson running game.

"He has been a big reason this offensive line is being discussed as the best Clemson has had under coach Dabo Swinney," Cubelic said.

### All-America matchup

Justin Madubuike, DT, Texas A&M vs. Solomon Kindley, OG, Georgia

The Aggies' first trip to Athens since



THOMAS GRANNING/AP

Texas A&M defensive lineman Justin Madubuike, above, has a big matchup this weekend in Athens, Ga., against Georgia offensive guard Solomon Kindley.

joining the Southeastern Conference features a monster matchup along the interior.

Madubuike is one of the more overlooked players in the SEC, if not the country.

The 309-pound junior is a disruptive force against the run and rushing the pass-

er, with 3.5 sacks and 9.5 tackles for loss.

He will probably draw attention from all three of Georgia's massive inside linemen. Kindley is the best of the bunch at left guard, maybe the best guard in the country.



# COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## TOP 25 SCHEDULE

### Saturday's games

No. 1 LSU vs. Arkansas  
No. 2 Ohio State vs. No. 9 Penn State  
No. 4 Georgia vs. No. 14 Texas A&M  
No. 5 Alabama vs. Western Carolina  
No. 6 Oregon at Arizona State  
No. 7 Utah at Arizona  
No. 8 Oklahoma vs. TCU  
No. 11 Minnesota at Northwestern  
No. 12 Michigan at Indiana  
No. 13 Baylor vs. Texas  
No. 14 Wisconsin vs. Purdue  
No. 15 Notre Dame vs. Boston College  
No. 16 Auburn vs. Samford  
No. 17 Cincinnati vs. Temple  
No. 18 Memphis at South Florida  
No. 19 Iowa vs. Illinois  
No. 20 Boise State at Utah State  
No. 21 SMU at Navy  
No. 22 Oklahoma State at West Virginia  
No. 23 Appalachian State vs. Texas State  
No. 25 Virginia Tech vs. Pittsburgh

## SERVICE ACADEMIES

### Air Force (8-2)

at New Mexico (2-8), Saturday  
Last week: Won 38-21 at Colorado St.

### Army (5-6)

at Hawaii (7-4), Dec. 1  
Last week: Won 47-6 vs. VMI

### Navy (7-2)

vs. SMU (9-1), Saturday  
Last week: Lost 52-20 at Notre Dame

## POWER FIVE STANDINGS

ACC				Atlantic Division				Overall			
				Conference	W	L	T	W	L	T	
Clemson	.....	4	3	0	11	0	0	11	0	0	
Louisville	.....	4	3	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
Iowa State	.....	4	3	0	6	5	0	6	5	0	
Wake Forest	.....	3	3	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	
Boise State	.....	3	3	0	4	3	0	4	3	0	
NC State	.....	1	5	0	4	6	0	4	6	0	
Syracuse	.....	1	5	0	4	6	0	4	6	0	
				Coastal Division							
Virginia	.....	5	2	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	
Pittsburgh	.....	4	3	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	
Virginia Tech	.....	4	2	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	
Miami State	.....	3	4	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	
North Carolina	.....	3	4	0	4	6	0	4	6	0	
Duke	.....	2	4	0	4	6	0	4	6	0	
Georgia Tech	.....	2	4	0	6	2	8	6	2	8	
				Big 12							
				Conference	W	L	T	W	L	T	
Baylor	.....	6	1	0	9	1	0	9	1	0	
Oklahoma	.....	6	1	0	9	1	0	9	1	0	
Iowa State	.....	4	3	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
Oklahoma State	.....	3	4	0	7	4	0	7	4	0	
Texas	.....	4	3	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
Kansas State	.....	3	4	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
TCU	.....	4	3	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
Texas Tech	.....	5	4	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
West Virginia	.....	5	4	0	6	4	0	6	4	0	
Kansas	.....	1	6	0	3	7	0	3	7	0	
				Big Ten							
				Conference	W	L	T	W	L	T	
Ohio State	.....	7	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	0	
UCLA	.....	6	2	8	1	0	2	6	2	8	
Michigan	.....	6	2	8	1	0	2	6	2	8	
Indiana	.....	4	3	7	3	0	3	4	3	7	
Michigan State	.....	4	3	7	3	0	3	4	3	7	
Maryland	.....	1	6	3	2	8	0	1	6	3	
Rutgers	.....	1	6	3	2	8	0	1	6	3	
				West							
Minnesota	.....	6	1	9	1	0	0	6	1	9	
Wisconsin	.....	4	3	7	3	0	3	4	3	7	
Illinois	.....	4	3	6	4	0	0	4	3	6	
Iowa	.....	4	3	6	4	0	0	4	3	6	
Purdue	.....	3	4	4	0	2	0	3	4	4	
Nebraska	.....	2	5	4	0	2	0	2	5	4	
Northwestern	.....	2	5	4	0	2	0	2	5	4	
				Pac-12							
				Conference	W	L	T	W	L	T	
Oregon	.....	9	0	10	0	0	0	9	0	10	
Oregon State	.....	4	3	4	5	0	1	4	3	4	
Washington	.....	4	3	4	5	0	1	4	3	4	
Stanford	.....	3	5	4	6	0	0	3	5	4	
Washington State	.....	2	5	5	1	0	0	2	5	5	
				South							
Utah	.....	6	1	9	1	0	0	6	1	9	
Southern Cal	.....	6	2	7	4	0	0	6	2	7	
UCLA	.....	4	3	4	5	0	1	4	3	4	
Arizona State	.....	2	5	5	1	0	0	2	5	5	
Arizona	.....	2	5	4	6	0	0	2	5	4	
Colorado	.....	2	5	4	6	0	0	2	5	4	
				SEC							
				Conference	W	L	T	W	L	T	
Georgia	.....	6	2	8	1	0	0	6	2	8	
Florida	.....	6	2	8	1	0	0	6	2	8	
Tennessee	.....	5	3	7	2	0	0	5	3	7	
Kentucky	.....	3	5	5	1	0	0	3	5	5	
South Carolina	.....	3	5	5	1	0	0	3	5	5	
Mississippi State	.....	2	4	5	1	0	0	2	4	5	
Mississippi	.....	2	4	5	1	0	0	2	4	5	
Vanderbilt	.....	1	6	2	8	0	0	1	6	2	
				West							
LSU	.....	6	0	10	0	0	0	6	0	10	
Auburn	.....	9	0	10	0	0	0	9	0	10	
Texas A&M	.....	4	2	7	3	0	0	4	2	7	
Auburn	.....	4	3	7	3	0	0	4	3	7	
Mississippi State	.....	4	3	7	3	0	0	4	3	7	
Mississippi	.....	2	5	4	6	0	0	2	5	4	
Arkansas	.....	0	6	2	8	0	0	0	6	2	



ADAM HUNGER/AP

Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields and the unbeaten Buckeyes play host to once-beaten Penn State in a key Big Ten game Saturday.

## KEY POWER FIVE MATCHUPS

### Texas (6-4)

#### at No. 13 Baylor (9-1)

9:30 p.m. Saturday CET

5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

AFN-Sports2

Series record: Texas leads 78-26-4.

**What's at stake?** — Coming off its first loss after blowing an early 25-point lead at home against Oklahoma, Baylor has another chance at home to clinch a spot in the Big 12 championship game. Bears coach Matt Rhule said he hasn't talked a lot to his players "about what they can clinch and all that. ... I'm sure they know that." Baylor last played Texas and Oklahoma in consecutive games in 2002, two lopsided losses long before the Bears were Big 12 contenders. Texas has to win its last two games, and get some help, to get back into the Big 12 tie game for the second year in a row. The Longhorns are coming off a 23-21 loss to Iowa State, which kicked a field goal on the game's final play. The last two wins by Texas have come on game-ending field goals by Cameron Dicker.

**Key matchup** — Texas' passing game, which has thrown for 3,006 yards, against Baylor's secondary, led by cornerback Grayland Arnold, who has four interceptions this season.

**Players to watch** — Baylor: Quarterback Charlie Brewer has passed for 2,532 yards and 18 touchdowns and rushed for 276 yards and nine touchdowns. WR Denzel Mims has 50 catches for 767 yards and 10 touchdowns. LB Terrell Bernard leads the team with 83 tackles. Defensive tackle James Lynch has 8.5 sacks.

**Texas:** Quarterback Sam Ehlinger has completed 243 of 372 passes for 2,914 yards and 27 touchdowns. He's also rushed for 428 yards and five touchdowns. Wide receiver Devin Duvernay has 87 catches for 1,017 yards and seven touchdowns. LB Joseph Ossai has 69 tackles, two sacks and two interceptions.

**Facts & figures** — The Longhorns won in Waco, 38-7, in 2017, marking Texas' largest margin of victory (31 points) against a conference opponent during coach Tom Herman's tenure. ... Baylor scored four first-half touchdowns in its loss to Oklahoma last week.

### No. 9 Penn State (9-1)

#### at No. 2 Ohio State (10-0)

6 p.m. Saturday CET

2 a.m. Sunday JKT

AFN-Sports

Series record: Ohio State leads 19-14.

**What's at stake?** — The Big Ten's East Division race comes down to this game. Ohio State gains a spot in the conference championship game Dec. 7 with a win. Penn State would also likely be in the conference championship if it wins as it will only have Rutgers to beat to reach the title game for the first time since 2016. Ohio State, of course, needs a win to ensure a spot in the College Football Playoff. The Buckeyes won the last meeting with the Nittany Lions, 27-26 in 2018.

**Key matchup** — Both teams have strong defenses that will be tested. Penn State is allowing only 13.5 points a game and scoring 36.8 per game but Ohio State is allowing only 9.8 points while scoring 51.5.

**Players to watch** — Ohio State: Quarterback Justin Fields has been stellar, completing 159 of 230 passes for 2,164 yards and 31 passing touchdowns against only one interception. Fields has also rushed for 10 touchdowns. Running back J.K. Dobbins keeps teams honest and he's carried 183 times for 1,289 yards and 13 touchdowns. Defensive end Chase Young (13.5 sacks), perhaps the best at his position in the nation, is back after a two-game suspension.

**Penn State:** Wide receiver KJ Hamler has been quarterback Sean Clifford's top target with 46 catches for 791 yards and eight touchdowns. Clifford, in his first year as a starter, has thrown for 2,450 yards and 22 touchdowns. Defensive linemen Shaka Stone and Yetur Gross-Matos each have 6.5 sacks. RB Journey Brown has run for 521 yards and six touchdowns.

**Facts & figures** — Ohio State has beaten each of its first 10 opponents by no fewer than 24 points but is playing a top-10 opponent for the first time. ... The Buckeyes have won two straight one-point games against Penn State, and the last three meetings have been decided by a total of five points. ... Penn State is playing a Top 25 opponent for the fifth time in six games, making this its most difficult stretch of games since the Associated Press poll began in 1936.

### No. 24 Texas A&M (7-3)

#### at No. 4 Georgia (9-1)

9:30 p.m. Saturday CET

5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

AFN-Sports

Series record — Texas A&M leads 3-2.

**What's at stake?** — Georgia has clinched a berth in the SEC championship game and is seeking to keep its playoff hopes alive. The Bulldogs can't afford a letdown as they face a second straight ranked opponent after an emotional 21-14 victory last week at No. 16 Auburn, which was ranked 13th at the time. Texas A&M is seeking its fifth straight victory but hasn't beaten anyone that currently owns a winning record. This marks the first time these two programs have faced off as SEC opponents. Georgia won the 2009 Independence Bowl 44-20 — the last time they played.

**Key matchup** — Georgia's defense against A&M's resurgent rushing game. The Aggies' offensive line has struggled, but lately it has been able to find holes for running backs with Cordan Richardson running for a career-high 130 yards on just six carries in A&M's win last week over South Carolina.

**Players to watch** — Georgia: QB Jake Fromm has completed 169 of 261 passes for 1,968 yards and 16 touchdowns to go with three interceptions. Running back D'Andre Swift has rushed for 1,027 yards on 164 carries for seven touchdowns. Linebacker Monty Rice leads the team with 66 tackles.

**Texas A&M:** Running back Isaiah Spiller is the leading rusher with 133 carries for 796 yards and eight touchdowns. Jhamon Ausbon has been the Aggies' top pass-catching option with 54 catches for 744 yards and three touchdowns. Linebacker Buddy Johnson leads the team with 64 tackles.

**Facts & figures** — Over the last four games, the Aggies haven't allowed a team to complete more than 46% of its passes, haven't given up a touchdown throw in three of those four, and on the year, are allowing fewer than 6 yards per pass. ... Georgia's defense hasn't allowed teams to rush more than 5 yards per carry in any game.

— Associated Press

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Time running out for ACC teams to earn bids

Only eight schools have secured bowl eligibility — fewest since expansion in '13

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — For the Atlantic Coast Conference, eight may not be enough.

Only eight ACC teams have secured bowl eligibility, and unless some teams find a way to rally that will mean the league will be sending fewer teams to the postseason than it has in any year since expanding to 14 schools in 2013.

Clemson, Louisville, Florida State, Wake Forest, Virginia, Pitt, Virginia Tech and Miami are all bowl-bound. Georgia Tech is the only ACC school that is eliminated from the bowl mix.

The good news for the league is five teams — Boston College, North Carolina State, Syracuse, North Carolina and Duke — still have a chance of getting to that six-win prerequisite. The bad news is that, with the exception of Boston College, those schools have no room for error. Boston College is 5-5, and the Wolfpack, Orange, Tar Heels and Blue Devils all carry 4-6 records into this penultimate weekend of the regular season.

"It's not easy for anybody in our football world," Duke coach David Cutcliffe said. "I mean everybody, everybody is suffering in some manner. ... I don't really have anything

to complain about by any manner. This season is not right."

He's right: The season is not over. But for those five still-hoping ACC teams, the end is perilously close. And for the Wolfpack and Tar Heels, one likely will have the chance to end the other's bowl hopes.

Boston College needs a win against either Notre Dame or Pitt to secure eligibility. Duke — loser of four straight by a combined score of 155-44 — needs to beat Wake Forest and Miami. N.C. State, also loser of four in a row, needs wins over Georgia Tech and North Carolina. Syracuse needs to sweep Wake Forest and Louisville. North Carolina plays Mercer this weekend, then N.C. State in the finale.

If North Carolina misses bowl season, that'll be a third consecutive postseason-less year for the Tar Heels. But a win over Mercer would give the Tar Heels five wins in 2019 — matching the total for 2017 and 2018 combined, and in the mind of coach Mack Brown, that means relevance.

"It's like a playoff game for us," Brown said of Saturday's home finale against FCS school Mercer. "We've got to win two games to get to a bowl game. ... It's out there for us."

It's no guarantee that the ACC gets past eight bowl-eligible teams, and of course that would be a bit of a blow.

The conference pools bowl revenue and shares it among ACC members, and fewer bowls would obviously mean less money to send around. The ACC had 11 bowl teams last season, 10 in each of the two years preceding that, nine in 2015, and 11 apiece in 2013 and 2014. The last time the ACC had fewer than eight bowl teams was 2012 — when it was just a 12-team league as opposed to the current 14-team one, and that was also a year where Miami and North Carolina had enough wins and would have played in bowls but neither school was eligible for the postseason.

The bowl chase is going on while the race for the ACC's Coastal title — and the right to face Clemson for the conference crown — is still undecided. Virginia is atop the Coastal, and if the Cavaliers win the division it will cap a seven-year, seven-different-winners run on that side of the league. And in the mind of Miami coach Manny Diaz, the party within the Coastal is just one of the reasons why it's tough for teams to hit big win totals.

"Anytime you've got teams that are going to focus on playing great defense, what are the chances for us to win? They're going to be competitive," Diaz said. "There's going to be great defensive coaches in this division, and I think that's why it's always a different road to get through."



ADAM HUNGER/AP

Buckeye linebacker Malik Harrison pressures Rutgers quarterback Johnny Langan on Saturday in Piscataway, N.J.

## Challenge: No. 2 Ohio State running away from competition

## FROM BACK PAGE

Adding to the drama this week is how this game finished the past two seasons, with the Buckeyes coming from behind late to win each time on drives engineered by quarterbacks. The last three games between the two teams have been decided by a total of five points.

Day said the latest quarterback, Georgia transfer Justin Fields, is up for the same challenge if it presents itself.

"I'm a pretty even-keeled guy," Fields said. "My emotions don't really change, so I'm just going into this game like every other week, same preparation, same focus at practice."

Ohio State gets an all-around boost with the return of All-

American defensive end Chase Young from a two-game suspension for violating NCAA rules by accepting a personal loan from a friend.

Young is second in the nation with 13½ sacks and is the best player on the nation's top defense.

"For us to sit here and expect that Ohio State isn't going to make plays on Saturday, they're going to," Penn State coach James Franklin said. "Don't be shocked by that. That's going to be my message to the team. They're going to make plays, we got to match them. It needs to be one of those types of games, like a heavyweight fight. That guy delivers a blow, you counter. That's what it's going to need to be."

## Scoreboard

## Wednesday's scores

**EAST**  
Buffalo 49, Toledo 30  
**MIDWEST**  
Miami (Ohio) 20, Akron 17

## Friday's games

**SOUTHWEST**  
Cent. Arkansas 31 at Incarnate Word (5-6)

**FAR WEST**  
Colorado St. (4-6) at Wyoming (6-4)

**Saturday's games**  
**EAST**  
CCSU (10-1) at Duquesne (6-4)

Georgetown (5-5) at Holy Cross (6-6)

Merrimack (5-5) at LIU (0-9)

Hampton (5-6) at Monmouth (N.J.) (2-2)

James Madison (10-1) at Rhode Island (2-9)

Sacred Heart (7-4) at Robert Morris (6-5)

Michigan St. (4-6) at Rutgers (2-8)

East Carolina (3-7) at UConn (2-6)

BYU (6-4) at UNLV (1-10)

Bucknell (3-7) at Fordham (3-8)

Morgan St. (3-8) at Howard (1-10)

Columbia (6-6) at Cornell (3-6)

Princeton (7-2) at Penn (5-4)

Delaware (5-6) at Villanova (8-3)

Cornell (3-6) at Penn State (5-5)

NYC (F.C.) (Pa.) (5-6) at Delaware St. (0-9)

Albany (NY) (4-4) at Stony Brook (5-6)

Monmouth (10-1) at Rutgers (2-8)

Nebraska (4-6) at Maryland (3-7)

SMU (9-1) at Navy (7-2)

**SOUTH**  
W. Carolina (3-8) at Alabama (9-1)

Saintford (5-6) at Auburn (7-3)

San Diego (8-2) at Jacksonville (3-8)

Chattanooga (7-4) at VMI (6-7)

Wofford (7-3) at The Citadel (6-5)

UCF (7-3) at Tulane (6-4)

Iberity (6-4) at Virginia (7-3)

Drake (5-4) at Davidson (8-3)

Stetson (6-4) at Furman (4-6)

Seton Hall (4-6) at Morehead St. (5-6)

Georgia Southern (5-5) at Georgia (6-4)

SC State (7-3) at Norfolk St. (5-6)

SC Andrews (0-1) at Presbyterian (1-10)

MSU (2-8) at Alabama A&M (6-5)

Mississippi Valley St. (5-5) at Southern (6-4)

E. Kentucky (6-4) at Jacksonville St. (6-5)

West Ala. (3-8) at Kentucky St. (2-9)

Texas St. (3-7) at Appalachian St. (9-1)

Arkansas (2-8) at Tennessee Tech (5-5)

E. Illinois (1-10) at Austin Peay (8-3)

Alcorn St. (7-3) at Jackson St. (4-7)

Sam Houston (5-5) at Charlotte Southern (6-4)

Marshall (7-3) at Charlotte (5-5)

Bethune-Cookman (6-4) at Florida A&M (9-1) at Orlando, Fla.

Texas A&M (7-3) at Georgia (9-1)

UT Martin (7-4) at UT State (5-5)

Mercer (4-7) at North Carolina (4-6)

W. Kentucky (6-4) at Southern Miss (7-3)

Louisiana Tech (8-2) at Utah (7-3)

ETSU (3-8) at Vanderbilt (2-8)

Pittsburgh (7-3) at Virginia Tech (7-3)

Syracuse (4-6) at Louisville (6-4)

Memphis (9-1) at South Florida (4-6)

Old Dominion (1-9) at Middle Tennessee (5-7)

Troy (5-4) at Louisiana-Lafayette (8-2)

Arkansas (2-8) at LSU (10-0)

Abilene Christian (5-6) at Miss. St. (4-6)

Duke (4-6) at Wake Forest (7-3)

**SOUTHWEST**  
Illinois (6-4) at Iowa St. (7-3)

Kansas (3-7) at Iowa St. (6-4)

Ball St. (4-6) at Kent St. (4-6)

Minnesota (9-1) at Northwestern (2-8)

Penn St. (9-1) at Ohio St. (10-0)

Indiana (5-5) at Youngstown St. (5-6)

Butler (3-8) at Dayton (7-3)

North Dakota St. (10-0) at N. Iowa (7-4)

S. Utah (3-8) at North Dakota (6-4)

Murray St. (4-7) at St. Michael's (8-3)

Marist (3-7) at Valparaiso (1-10)

Boston College (5-5) at Notre Dame (8-2)

Indiana St. (4-7) at Missouri (1-9)

N. Dakota St. (11-0) at S. Illinois (7-4)

S. Dakota St. (7-3) at South Dakota (4-7)

Michigan (8-2) at Indiana (7-3)

Purdue (4-6) at Wisconsin (8-2)

Temple (7-3) at Cincinnati (9-1)

Tennessee (5-5) at Missouri (5-5)

## Who's in?



## Second Round

Saturday, Nov. 30

Shepherd-Indiana (Pa.) winner at Slippery Rock (11-0)

West Chester-Notre Dame (Ohio) winner vs. Tiffin-Kutztown

West Florida-Wingate winner at Valdosta State (10-0)

Miles-Lenoir-Rhyne winner vs. Carson-Newman-Bowie State winner

Indianapolis-Central Missouri winner at Ferris State (10-0)

Lindenwood (Mo.)-Ouachita Baptist winner vs. Harding-Northwest Missouri State winner

Augustana (S.D.)-Colorado St.-Pueblo (10-1) at Colorado St.-Pueblo (10-1)

Texas A&M-Commerce-Tarleton State winner vs. Sioux Falls-Coronado Mines winner

NCAA Division III playoffs

First Round

Saturday, Nov. 23

Huntingdon (7-3) at Berry (9-1)

Warburg (9-1) at Howe (9-1)

NY-Maritime (5-5) at Salisbury (9-0)

Case Western Reserve (9-1) at Union (9-1)

MIT (7-2) at Muhlenberg (10-0)

Brookline (18-2) at W. New England (1-1)

Hanover (9-1) at Mount Union (10-0)

Framingham State (8-2) Wesley (9-1)

Delaware Valley (9-1) at Bridgewater (Va.) (10-0)

NYC (NY) (4-4) at Mary Hardin-Baylor (10-0)

Monmouth (III) (7-2) at Wisconsin-Whitewater (9-1)

Martin Luther (9-1) at Wheaton (III) (10-0)

Wisconsin-Oshkosh (8-2) at Central (9-1)

Aurora (9-1) at St. John's (Minn.) (9-1)

Vabash (9-1) at North Central (III) (9-1)

Linfield (8-1) at Chapman (9-0)

## NAIA playoffs

First Round

Saturday, Nov. 23

Dickinson State (N.D.) (9-2) at Morn-ingland (Iowa) (10-0)

Reinhardt (Ga.) (9-2) at Marian (Ind.) (9-0)

Baker (Kan.) (8-2) at Kansas Wesleyan (Ind.) (11-0)

Concordia (Mich.) (8-2) at Grand View (Iowa) (10-0)

St. Francis (Ind.) (7-2) at Lindsey Wilson (10-0)

St. Xavier (Ill.) (8-2) at Northwestern (Iowa) (9-1)

Claremont (Cal.) (9-1) at Clallam (10-0)

Cumbeberlands (Ky.) (9-1) at Keiser (Fia.) (9-0)

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Texas A&M running back Cordarrian Richardson runs for a 75-yard touchdown as South Carolina defensive back Israel Mukuamu chases him during last week's game in College Station, Texas. The 24th-ranked Aggies can still wreck the plans of No. 4 Georgia and No. 1 LSU.

# Playing the spoiler

## Aggies still have games with Georgia, LSU

By KRISTIE RIEKEN  
Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Texas A&M has yet to become a power in the Southeastern Conference in its eighth season in the league. With trips to No. 4 Georgia and top-ranked LSU to end the regular season, the Aggies could thrust their way into the spotlight by playing spoiler.

The 24th-ranked Aggies aren't yet among the SEC's elite in coach Jimbo Fisher's second year, but they're still a formidable foe. They've won four in a row and their three losses have come against No. 3 Clemson, No. 16 Auburn and No. 5 Alabama. The Tigers were ranked No. 1 at the time of their game.

"This team will probably be one of the most talented teams we've played against," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "We all know who their three losses are against. I feel like the three losses are against Top 10 teams that are really, really good football teams. And they have an immense amount of talent."

Fisher, who won a national title in 2013 at Florida State, said he is much more worried about improving his team than spoiling anyone's season.

"We want to affect the outcome of our own program and how we play and what we do and what we get out of that ... we've played well this last month, and we can keep November rolling and play well, play good football," he said. "It's important for our program. The playoffs are wonderful, but I'm worried about what's going on at



BUTCH DILL/AP

Running back Brian Herrien and No. 4 Georgia are in position to make the College Football Playoff, but those hopes would be dashed with a loss to A&M.

A&M."

Auburn was in a similar situation in 2017 when the team beat No. 2 Georgia and No. 1 Alabama late in the season to rise from No. 16 in the polls to fourth and reach the SEC title game for the first time since 2013. Auburn's late push ended a streak of three straight SEC titles for the Crimson Tide. The Tigers ended up losing to Georgia in the rematch for the conference championship.

The Bulldogs know people would love to ruin their title hopes. But they're confident that they can finish the season strongly after bouncing back from a double-overtime loss to South Carolina with four straight victories to win the East and land in the top four of the College Foot-

ball Playoff rankings.

"We always knew we controlled our own destiny. We always knew we could be back in this position and just continue to work and do what we have to do to get back," linebacker Azeem Ojulari said.

Smart is aware that he can't shield his players from talk of the playoff, so he doesn't try to tell them to ignore it. Instead, he just implores them to focus on paying attention to details on the field.

"What you try to emphasize is the facts," he said. "Here are the facts ... if we block and tackle people, if we do simple better, we're pretty good. If we don't and we turn the ball over and we don't play well on special teams and we give up big, explosive plays, we're not very good."

LSU, meanwhile, is looking to reach the SEC title game for the first time since 2011, though the Tigers also have national championship hopes.

In last year's meeting in College Station, Texas A&M snapped a seven-game skid in the LSU series with an epic 72-70 win in seven overtimes.

LSU coach Ed Orgeron is pleased with how his team has grown in his third full season in charge in Baton Rouge after taking over for Les Miles after four games in 2016.

"It seems like this year it's come all together," he said. "It has taken us three years. Yes, it is a process. Maybe that's too long. Maybe that's a short time. I don't know ... but I always knew at LSU you have to win. I know the expectations at LSU (are) you have to win. My goal has always been to win at LSU."

# Uncertainty still abounds in Pac-12

By ANNE M. PETERSON  
Associated Press

Oregon has locked up the Pac-12 North, but much remains uncertain for the conference — even for the sixth-ranked Ducks.

Coach Mario Cristobal's team has a shot at a College Football Playoff berth, but it will need help from inside and outside the league. Oregon's best hope is to face and beat No. 7 Utah in the conference championship game.

Only the Pac-12 South hasn't been decided just yet.

A season-opening loss to Auburn dealt a major blow to the Ducks' playoff aspirations. They responded with a string of victories in a conference known for cannibalizing its contenders.

"The best part about our guys, and it sounds like a broken record every time I come here and see you guys after a game, our guys feel like we still haven't played our best football," Cristobal said.

The Ducks (9-1, 7-0) have two more regular-season games, the first at Arizona State (5-5, 2-5) on Saturday, and the Civil War rivalry game at home against Oregon State on Thanksgiving weekend.

Following Oregon's 34-6 win over Arizona on Saturday, quarterback Justin Herbert looked back to his freshman year, when the Ducks went 4-8 under Mark Helfrich. Then there was Willie Taggart's lone season before Cristobal steadied the ship. Now there's a chance to do something special.

"It's a sign of all the hard work that we've put in, and it's a great opportunity for us," Herbert said.

Further down the North division standings, a few teams are chasing bowl eligibility. Surprising Oregon State (5-5, 4-3) is currently second, with Washington (6-4, 3-4) and Stanford (4-6, 3-5) still in play as runners-up to the Ducks. California (5-5, 2-5) and Washington State (5-5, 2-5) are at the bottom of the pack.

Huskies coach Chris Petersen said the tough part about this season was losing games the team felt it should have won.

"I know it's just sports and there's a lot more things in life that are more important than that, winning and losing football games. We all get that. But in terms of the energy and importance, and the effort that everybody puts into it, it is hard to reload and stay focused. And keep scratching and keep clawing, keep supporting each other," Petersen said. "That's hard. I think there's a lot of good that can come out of that. Not just for these kids football-wise but other things down the road."

## The South

This is where it gets complicated.

Utah looked simply dominant in its 49-3 victory over UCLA this past weekend. The Utes (9-1, 6-1) were picked in the preseason to

win the conference title.

But first Utah needs to lock up the South. The team faces Arizona (4-6, 2-5) on the road Saturday and Colorado (4-6, 2-5) at the end of the season.

Meanwhile, USC (7-4, 6-2) is still lurking. While the Trojans have fewer overall victories than Utah, they have that all-important victory over the Utes at the Coliseum earlier this season.

Utah has won six straight since that loss, and now the Utes are trying to stay focused while taking in more national attention.

"It certainly gets louder and there is more of it, but you still have to take the same approach and the same M.O. of just not listening to it and keeping your vision and focus with what the immediate task at hand is," coach Kyle Whittingham said. "Our guys to this point have done a great job of that and here we are with the last two games of the regular season and hopefully we don't deviate from that now."

## Bowl eligibility

Just four teams — Oregon, Washington, USC and Utah — have the prerequisite six wins for bowl eligibility in the league at this point. In 2018 the Pac-12 passed a rule requiring teams to have six, so no five-win teams will qualify.

The winner of this week's game between Washington State and Oregon State in Pullman will become bowl eligible. Technically, 11 Pac-12 teams can earn a spot in the postseason. It's unlikely, but possible.

The conference could also wind up with only five bowl-bound teams.

"There is parity," Petersen said. "It is hard to win. Look at the scores and all those types of things. I know as the season goes on things shake out but I look at what is going on this weekend and I'm like 'yup, everybody has a good chance to win.' And there are no gimmes. You better play good or you're going to get beat."



CHRIS PIETSON/AP

Quarterback Justin Herbert and No. 6 Oregon have already clinched the Pac-12 North.



## NFL



PHOTOS BY BRIAN BLANCO/AP

Falcons wide receiver Calvin Ridley catches a touchdown pass during the second half of Sunday's 29-3 blowout of the Carolina Panthers in Charlotte, N.C.

# Falcons finally taking flight

Atlanta turning it around after starting season 1-7

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
Associated Press

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — The Falcons can't explain it. They'll try to come up with this reason or that, but the perplexed looks betray that they're just as baffled as everyone else.

In a tale of two seasons, Atlanta suddenly looks like the team the Falcons were expected to be all along.

Unfortunately, they only showed that form after a 1-7 start, which likely left too deep a hole and not enough time to pull off an improbable playoff run.

Still, the mood is a whole lot sunnier around Flowery Branch.

Two straight dominating road wins over division opponents will do that to a team.

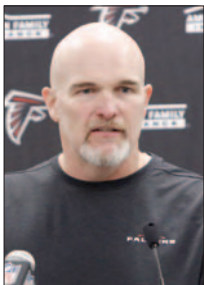
"This is what I hoped we would look like," coach Dan Quinn said.

After romping past first-place New Orleans 27-9 in perhaps the most surprising result of the season, the Falcons (3-7) followed up with a 29-3 rout at Carolina last weekend.

Atlanta will try to stretch its out-of-nowhere winning streak to three in a row against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (3-7) on Sunday, the first of three straight home games and a chance to vacate last place in the NFC South.

What happened? "It's a question that I've obviously been struggling with the first part of the season," Quinn said. "You looked under the hood and everything looked right, but it just wasn't running like you'd hoped it would."

After the Falcons' sixth straight loss, Quinn took advantage of a bye week to thoroughly assess his



In the two games since Falcons head coach Dan Quinn, pictured, moved receivers coach Raheem Morris over to work with the secondary and turned defensive play-calling responsibilities over to Morris and linebackers coach Jeff Ulbrich, the Falcons have allowed just nine points.

team. The biggest change was a shake-up of the coaching staff, with Raheem Morris moving over to work with the secondary after serving as receivers coach. Also, while Quinn remains the defensive coordinator, he has largely turned over the responsibility for callings plays to Morris and linebackers coach Jeff Ulbrich.

The results have been striking. The Falcons did not allow a touchdown in the last two games, a streak that actually stretches back 10 quarters to their Week 8 loss to Seattle. They're suddenly getting pressure on opposing quarterbacks, registering 11 sacks against the Saints and Panthers after managing just seven over their first eight games. They had four interceptions against

## By the numbers

# 11

Sacks by the Falcons defense the past two weeks after totaling just seven in their first eight games.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Carolina, further fueling the turnaround.

Safety Ricardo Allen was all smiles after practice Wednesday.

"We're finally proving to ourselves that if we put in the work during the week, if we go hard enough during the week, if we keep our head down and silence the noise on our side, the sky's the limit," he said.

Some players are still toyling with the idea of making the playoffs, though that seems highly unlikely.

The best the Falcons can finish is 9-7, which means the Saints (8-2) only have to win two more games to ensure they can't be caught by Atlanta in the division race. The wild-card picture is the same, with Seattle (8-2) and Minnesota (8-3) both comfortably ahead of the Falcons.

"As a player, as an athlete, as a competitor, absolutely, you're trying to look at every way," running back Kenjon Barner said. "OK, if they lose and we win ... yeah, we've had those conversations."

In their quieter moments, the coaches and players are surely frustrated that it took so long to find a winning formula.

They're doing their best not to look back.

# Cowboys offense humming despite Zeke's struggles

By SCHUYLER DIXON  
Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — Ezekiel Elliott lost interest in talking about another 40-yard outing because the star Dallas running back said he felt awkward discussing his struggles in a game the Cowboys won.

Center Travis Frederick started his assessment of the run game with a reminder that there might be a reason Dak Prescott had the most yards passing in a three-game stretch in team history.

This season is shaping up as Elliott's first full year without a rushing title, and is already notable as the first with consecutive games of fewer than 50 yards rushing. It could also be the first time Dallas has the NFL's No. 1 offense, its current ranking, in more than 40 years.

"I'm going to be a lot more worried when he gets bottled up and we can't pass the ball," Frederick said of Elliott, the two-time rushing champion who is eighth this year and more than 200 yards behind leader Christian McCaffrey of Carolina with six games to go.

"At some point we're going to find a defense that is doing a certain thing to make it work on both sides and then at that point we have to hopefully have the background to be able to step around that, find a workaround for that."

And that very well could be Sunday when the Cowboys (6-4) visit New England (9-1) and the league's No. 1 defense, the only one allowing fewer than 100 yards rushing and 200 yards passing per game.

While Elliott is tied for the NFL lead with McCaffrey and Dalvin Cook of Minnesota with five 100-yard games apiece, his highest total in the other five games is 62 yards, with a per-carry average of 3.1 yards.

The Vikings made sure Elliott didn't beat them two weeks ago, holding him to 47 yards on 20

**'When you win a football game, you are excited, you are happy. All the other stuff will handle itself.'**

Ezekiel Elliott  
Cowboys running back

carries and escaping with a 28-24 win by forcing a turnover on downs inside their 15 when the Cowboys went to Elliott on three straight plays.

Detroit had the same idea last weekend, but Elliott managed touchdowns on a 1-yard plunge and a 17-yard screen while being held to 45 yards on 16 carries in his second straight game without a carry of at least 10 yards.

Oh, and Prescott had 444 yards passing with three TDs in Dallas' 35-27 victory.

"As long as the offense is rolling, it's good," said Elliott, who has 833 yards rushing and seven touchdowns along with 220 yards receiving and one score. "I think if you have a problem keeping your spirits up when you win a football game ... when you win a football game, you are excited, you are happy. All the other stuff will handle itself."

Part of the discussion is moot. The Cowboys just gave Elliott a \$90 million, six-year extension to end a preseason-long holdout. Even with Prescott in the top five in yards passing, touchdowns and completions, the team's identity isn't changing that fast.

"We love giving him the ball," coach Jason Garrett said. "Even a game like (Detroit), when the running game is a little bit more challenging, you look at all those really good 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-yard runs that he made throughout the game. We think a lot of him."



RICK OSSENTOSKI/AP

Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott scores on a 1-yard touchdown run during Sunday's 35-27 win over the Lions in Detroit.

NFL



### Carolina Panthers (5-5) at New Orleans Saints (8-2)

AFN-Sports2  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT

**Series:** Panthers lead 25-23.

**Last meeting:** Panthers beat Saints 33-14, Dec. 30, 2018.

**Notes:** Saints have won three of past four meetings. ... Panthers quarterback Kyle Allen had a career-high 325 passing yards last week in 29-3 loss to Falcons. ... Running back Christian McCaffrey had 191 scrimmage yards (121 receiving, 70 rushing) and 11 receptions last week. He has seven career games with 10 or more catches. ... Tight end Greg Olsen has 37 catches for 462 yards and three TDs in his past five games against the Saints. ... Saints quarterback Drew Brees passed for 228 yards and three TDs last week in 34-17 victory over Buccaneers. ... Running back Alvin Kamara had 122 scrimmage yards (75 rushing, 47 receiving) and 10 catches last week. ... Running back Latavius Murray has four TDs in his last four games. ... Safety Marcus Williams had a 55-yard interception return last week.



### Seattle Seahawks (8-2) at Philadelphia Eagles (5-5)

AFN-Sports  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT

**Series:** Seahawks lead 9-7.

**Last meeting:** Seahawks beat Eagles 24-10, Dec. 3, 2017.

**Notes:** Seahawks have won past four meetings. ... Seahawks coach Pete Carroll is 4-1 against the Eagles over his career. ... Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson rushed for 53 yards and a TD in 27-24 victory over 49ers in Week 10 (had bye last week). ... Running back Chris Carson had 101 scrimmage yards (89 rushing, 12 receiving) and a rushing TD in Week 10. ... Wide receiver Tyler Lockett had a TD catch in the last meeting. ... Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz passed for 214 yards and a TD last week in 17-10 loss to Patriots. ... Tight end Zach Ertz had nine catches for 94 yards last week. ... Wide receiver Alshon Jeffery had 61 receiving yards last week. ... Defensive tackle Fletcher Cox had a career-high 11 tackles and a tackle for loss in last home meeting.

**Packers tight end  
Jimmy Graham**  
Matt Luttkie/AP

## WEEK 12 TELEVIEWED GAMES

### MARQUEE MATCHUP

# Green Bay Packers (8-2) at San Francisco 49ers (9-1)

AFN-Sports, 2:20 a.m. Monday CET, 10:20 a.m. Monday JKT

**SERIES RECORD:** Packers lead 32-27-1.

**LAST MEETING:** Packers beat 49ers 33-30, Oct. 15, 2018.

**PACKERS OFFENSE:** OVERALL (17), RUSH (18), PASS (11).

**PACKERS DEFENSE:** OVERALL (28), RUSH (25), PASS (23).

**49ERS OFFENSE:** OVERALL (5), RUSH (2), PASS (15).

**49ERS DEFENSE:** OVERALL (2), RUSH (20), PASS (1).

**STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES:** Packers have won past two meetings. ... Packers are plus-9 in takeaways/giveaways category. ... Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers had 425 passing yards and two TDs in last meeting. ... He has 1,927 passing yards and 13 TDs in six career starts against the 49ers. He's thrown just two interceptions in those six games. ... Running back Aaron Jones rushed for

93 yards and three TDs in Week 10 (Packers had a bye last week). He became the first Packers player since Hall of Famer Jim Taylor (1962) with two or more games of three or more rushing touchdowns in a single season. ... Running back Jamal Williams has five TDs in his past five games. ... Wide receiver Davante Adams had seven catches for 118 yards in Week 10, his 14th career game with 100 more more receiving yards. He had 10 receptions for 132 yards and two TDs in the last meeting. ... Tight end Jimmy Graham had 104 receiving yards in the last meeting. ... 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo passed for a career-high 424 yards and four TDs last week in 36-26 victory over Cardinals. ... Running back Tevin Coleman has five TDs in four home games. ... Fullback Kyle Juszczyk had a career-high seven receptions last week. ... Rookie wide receiver Deebo Samuel led team with eight receptions for a career-high 134 yards last week. ... Tight end Ross Dwelley had first career receiving TDs in Week 11. ... Defensive lineman Nick Bosa ranks second in the NFL with 13 tackles for losses.



Game capsules compiled from nflcommunications.com



### Dallas Cowboys (6-4) at New England Patriots (9-1)

AFN-Sports  
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET  
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT

**Series:** Cowboys lead 7-5.

**Last meeting:** Patriots beat Cowboys 30-6, Oct. 11, 2015.

**Notes:** Patriots have won past five meetings. ... Patriots coach Bill Belichick is 5-1 against the Cowboys. ... Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott passed for 444 yards and three TDs last week in 35-27 victory over the Lions. ... Running back Ezekiel Elliott had two rushing TDs last week, his fifth career game with both rushing and receiving TDs. ... Wide receiver Michael Gallup had a career-high nine receptions for 148 yards last week. ... Patriots are plus-18 in takeaways/giveaways category. ... Patriots quarterback Tom Brady is 4-0 against the Cowboys with nine TD passes and two interceptions. ... Wide receiver Julian Edelman threw a 15-yard, game-winning TD pass last week in 17-10 victory over the Eagles. ... Defensive lineman Danny Shelton had a season-high seven tackles and a sack last week.



### Baltimore Ravens (8-2) at Los Angeles Rams (6-4)

AFN-Sports  
2:15 a.m. Tuesday CET  
10:15 a.m. Tuesday JKT

**Series:** Ravens lead 4-2.

**Last meeting:** Ravens beat Rams 16-13, Nov. 22, 2015.

**Notes:** Ravens have won past three meetings. ... Ravens lead NFL in rushing yards and are first team since the 1978 Patriots with 2,000 rushing yards in the first 10 games of the season. ... Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson had 86 rushing yards last week in 41-7 victory over Texans. ... His seventh consecutive game with 50 or more rushing yards — the longest streak ever by an NFL quarterback. ... Running back Gus Edwards had a 63-yard TD run and a season-high 112 rushing yards last week. ... Rams running back Todd Gurley had 133 scrimmage yards (97 rushing, 36 receiving) and a rushing TD last week in 17-7 victory over the Bears. He has 64 career TDs, the second-most by a player under age 26 in NFL history. ... Defensive tackle Aaron Donald had two sacks last week. He has 12 games with two or more sacks since 2016, the most in the NFL. He had a sack in the last meeting.

## EXPANDED STANDINGS

### American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East	PF	PA	Home	Away	AFC	NFC	Div
New England	9	1	0	.900	287	108	4-0	5-1	0	6-1	0-0	4-0
Buffalo	7	3	0	.700	211	170	3-2	4-1	0	5-2	2-1	3-1
N.Y. Jets	4	7	0	.400	164	255	2-3	1-4	0	0-6	3-1	0-4
Miami	2	8	0	.200	139	305	1-5	1-3	0	2-6	0-2	1-3
Indianapolis	6	4	0	.600	227	206	4-2	2-2	0	5-4	1-0	3-0
Houston	6	4	0	.600	245	232	3-1	3-3	0	5-2	1-2	2-1
Tennessee	5	5	0	.500	203	197	3-2	2-3	0	3-4	2-1	0-2
Jacksonville	4	6	0	.400	189	222	2-3	2-3	0	4-4	0-2	1-3
Baltimore	8	2	0	.800	341	196	4-1	4-1	0	6-2	2-0	3-1
Pittsburgh	5	5	0	.500	200	202	4-2	1-3	0	4-3	1-2	1-2
Cleveland	4	7	0	.400	192	228	2-3	2-3	0	4-3	0-3	2-0
Cincinnati	0	10	0	.000	147	276	0-4	0-6	0	0-6	0-4	0-3
Kansas City	7	4	0	.636	309	256	2-3	5-1	0	5-3	2-1	3-0
Oakland	6	4	0	.600	225	250	5-1	1-3	0	4-2	2-2	2-1
L.A. Chargers	4	7	0	.364	224	218	2-4	2-3	0	2-6	2-1	0-3
Denver	3	7	0	.300	172	197	2-3	1-4	0	3-4	0-3	1-2

### National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East	PF	PA	Home	Away	NFC	AFC	Div
Dallas	6	4	0	.600	286	197	3-2	3-2	0	5-3	1-1	4-0
Philadelphia	5	5	0	.500	234	230	3-2	2-3	0	3-4	2-1	1-1
Washington	2	8	0	.200	203	289	1-4	1-4	0	2-5	0-3	1-2
San Francisco	9	1	0	.900	125	253	0-5	1-4	0	0-6	1-3	0-3
New Orleans	8	2	0	.800	238	199	4-1	4-1	0	6-2	2-0	2-1
Carolina	5	5	0	.500	228	257	2-3	3-2	0	2-5	3-0	1-2
Atlanta	3	7	0	.300	220	262	1-3	2-4	0	3-4	0-3	2-0
Tampa Bay	3	7	0	.300	277	313	1-4	2-3	0	3-6	0-1	1-3
Green Bay	8	2	0	.800	250	205	5-1	3-1	0	5-1	3-1	3-0
Minnesota	8	3	0	.727	289	205	5-0	3-3	0	6-2	2-1	1-2
Chicago	4	6	0	.400	169	174	2-3	2-3	0	3-4	1-2	2-1
Detroit	3	6	1	.350	244	272	2-3	1-3	1	2-4	1-2	0-3
San Francisco	9	1	0	.900	295	155	4-1	5-0	0	6-1	3-0	3-1
Seattle	8	2	0	.800	275	254	3-2	5-0	0	5-1	3-1	3-0
L.A. Rams	6	4	0	.600	243	198	3-2	3-2	0	4-3	2-1	2-0
Arizona	3	7	1	.318	248	317	1-3	2-4	0	2-6	1-1	0-3

## ALSO ON AFN

Oakland Raiders (6-4) at New York Jets (3-7), AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m. Sunday CET; 3 a.m. Monday JKT  
Jacksonville Jaguars (4-6) at Tennessee Titans (5-5), AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. Sunday CET; 6 a.m. Monday JKT

## REST OF THE SCHEDULE

Tampa Bay (3-7) at Atlanta (3-7)  
Miami (2-8) at Cleveland (4-6)  
N.Y. Giants (2-8) at Chicago (4-6)  
Denver (7-4) at Buffalo (7-5)  
Detroit (3-6-1) at Washington (1-9)  
San Francisco (9-1) at Pittsburgh (4-6)  
Opent: Arizona (3-7-1), Minnesota (2-8-3), Kansas City (7-4), L.A. Chargers (4-7)



## SPORTS



**Falcons take flight**  
Atlanta back on track following miserable 1-7 start » **NFL, Page 62**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Competitive imbalance

Closing weeks could finally bring challenge for 'Blowout Buckeyes'

BY MITCH STACY  
Associated Press

**O**hio State coach Ryan Day has been saying all season how he wants to see how his team plays when a game is tight, nasty and intense in the fourth quarter.

That hasn't happened yet. Through 10 games, Day has had the luxury of the Buckeyes running away from other teams by halftime or shortly thereafter and watching the backups mop up. Consider that his second-string running back, Master Teague III, has piled up 744 rushing yards on 114 carries, all in relief of J.K. Dobbins.

Day may get his wish soon.

The second-ranked Buckeyes begin the most rigorous two-game stretch of the season that will see them host No. 9 Penn State on Saturday and finish the regular season the following week in Ann Arbor against No. 12 Michigan, their archrival. If Ohio State wins out, the Buckeyes will be in the Big Ten championship on Dec. 7, likely against Minnesota or Wisconsin, and of course they have national title hopes, too.

"I think our team knows what's at stake," Day said Tuesday. "We've talked about that, but now it's just time to focus on Penn State."

The closest thing to on-field adversity the Buckeyes have experienced this season was leading by just three points early in the third quarter against then-No. 13 Wisconsin before reeling off 28 points on the way to a 38-7 win.

"We just have to be mature enough to understand how important every series, every play is, and it might just be one play that changes the game," Day said. "I can't really say that we've been in a game where that's the case this year. Understanding that as coaches, understanding that as players, is going to be huge."

SEE CHALLENGE ON PAGE 60

## Inside:

- Texas A&M could still play spoiler for top-ranked LSU, No. 4 Georgia, Page 61

Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields carries the ball during the Buckeyes' 56-21 win over Rutgers last week in Piscataway, N.J.

KYLE ROBERTSON, THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH/TNS



**No comment: Astros owner mum on probe** » MLB, Page 57



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